

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

GREG GIANFORTE
GOVERNOR



KRISTEN JURAS
LT. GOVERNOR

July 21, 2021

Secretary Tom Vilsack
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Jefferson Drive SW
Washington, D.C. 20024

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

Following up on my July 1 letter requesting a federal drought designation for all Montana counties, which I sent immediately after declaring a statewide drought emergency, I write to follow up on my request to allow for emergency haying and grazing on all of Montana's participating CRP acreage.

I continue to hear from Montana agricultural producers across our state impacted by record-breaking heat, significantly below-average precipitation, and associated drought with rivers flowing at a rate as low as 16 percent. At this juncture in our statewide drought emergency, it is imperative that all Montanans be able to take advantage of and utilize viable acres of CRP land for haying and grazing purposes. With the primary nesting season closed, and the 60-day time limit on haying extended in counties that were unable to hay, a decision by the USDA to open all participating CRP acreage to emergency hazing and grazing would allow all CRP participants to take full advantage of viable forage. Drought conditions continue to get worse, and our agricultural sector needs relief and as swiftly as possible.

The efforts your office has already made to help Montana producers address an extreme drought emergency are greatly appreciated. I urge you to continue to help Montana farmers and ranchers by allowing for emergency haying and grazing on all of Montana's participating CRP acreage and designating the remaining Montana counties as drought disaster areas.

Thank you for time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Greg Gianforte".

Greg Gianforte
Governor