

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 7, 2018

The Honorable Pat Roberts  
Chairman  
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry  
U.S. Senate  
328A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Michael Conaway  
Chairman  
Committee on Agriculture  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1301 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry  
U.S. Senate  
328A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Collin Peterson  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Agriculture  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1301 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairman Roberts, Chairman Conaway, Ranking Member Stabenow, and Ranking Member Peterson:

As you continue negotiating a final 2018 Farm Bill conference report, we write to urge you to maintain a provision related to the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) in Section 2301(2)(A) of the Senate amendment to H.R. 2. The State of Delaware is home to a vibrant and thriving poultry industry. Many of our farmers utilize EQIP cost share assistance for best management practices that benefit the environment, including manure storage and composting facilities. As we have all visited with poultry growers in our state, we have heard a common problem that is resolved by this provision in the Senate Farm Bill.

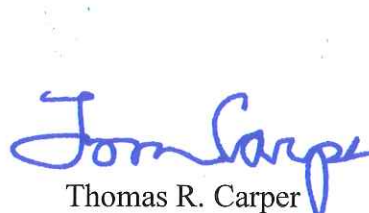
According to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), farmers can only apply for EQIP funds when they have an "existing resource concern." What this means, in practice, is that poultry growers cannot access EQIP funds until they have birds on their farms. This period of time when farmers have birds on their farms but do not have adequate manure management facilities creates environmental and biosecurity challenges and undercuts the mission of EQIP.

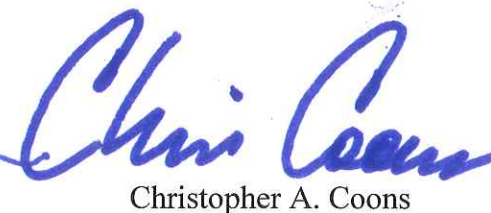
Through our conversations with affected farmers, we have been able to identify a solution to this problem. Rather than requiring farmers to have an "existing resource concern," our proposed solution is to have EQIP provide funding for "identified, new, or expected resource concerns." We believe that the current situation our farmers find themselves in is simply an unintended consequence of previous EQIP language, and that this provision represents a commonsense solution that provides a win for both farmers and the environment.


We are thankful to our Senate colleagues for including this language in the Senate Farm Bill and urge you to maintain it in the final 2018 Farm Bill conference report. Should you or your staff

have any additional questions, please feel free to contact Brian Papp in Senator Carper's office at (202) 224-2441, Anna Yelverton in Senator Coons' office at (202) 224-5042, or Andrew Donnelly in Congresswoman Blunt Rochester's office at (202) 225-4165. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator

  
Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator

  
Lisa Blunt Rochester  
Member of Congress