

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 5, 2023

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Jamie L. Whitten Building
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington DC, 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

We applaud USDA's dedication of \$104 million to assist organic dairy producers through the new Organic Dairy Marketing Assistance Program (ODMAP) and appreciate that nearly \$20 million has been distributed to organic producers so far. The vitality of agricultural producers, specifically organic dairy producers in our communities, has been at the forefront of our minds.

Regrettably, conditions in organic dairy remain challenging with drought determinations in many organic dairy regions as well as acute flooding that devastated crop production. We continue to hear from the organic industry and their partners that the on-the-farm strain of today is difficult and the initial ODMAP payments, while necessary, didn't adequately reflect the cost dynamics in organic dairy. Many organic dairies continue to be unable to utilize cash flow for basic inputs like grain and the routine maintenance of equipment and facilities. This has caused many to either drain what personal savings they have to stay in business or to exit the industry altogether.

Given these realities, we urge you to take all necessary steps, this calendar year, to collaborate with organic dairy stakeholders to extend support to additional organic dairy farmers using the remaining ODMAP funds. Our understanding is that ODMAP has nearly \$83 million in remaining, unspent funds, which should be used to continue to support our organic dairy farmers. Whether it is updating the calculations for the program payment rate, initiating a sign-up for another year's projected future marketing costs, or some other mechanism to improve coverage results, the remaining funds dedicated for ODMAP should be distributed promptly.


We must support these small family farms that are the foundation of the organic dairy industry and many of our rural economies. Not only will our communities lose if these farms exit the industry, but also organic consumers, who oftentimes have the purchase choice of locally sourced organic milk.

We urge the department to collaborate with the organic dairy industry to distribute the remaining ODMAP funds expeditiously and efficiently. Thank you for your attention to this matter and we look forward to our continued work together to support our nation's farmers.

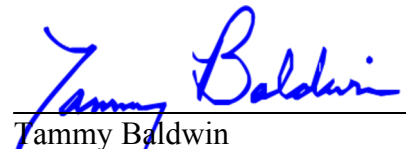
Sincerely,



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



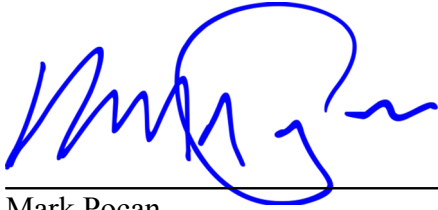
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



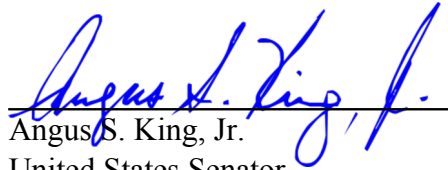
Derrick Van Orden
Member of Congress



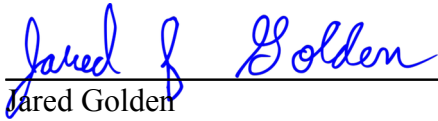
Marcus J. Molinaro
Member of Congress



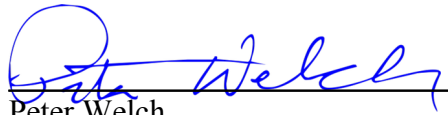
Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



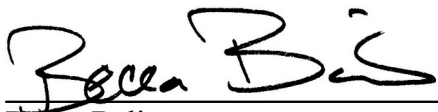
Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Jared Golden
Member of Congress



Peter Welch
United States Senator



Becca Balint
Member of Congress



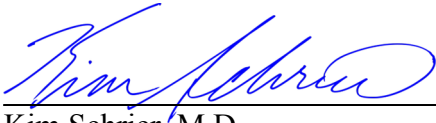
Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
Member of Congress



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



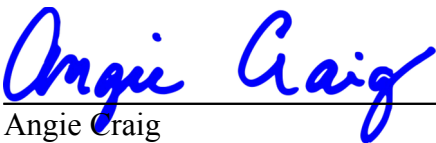
Alex Padilla
United States Senator



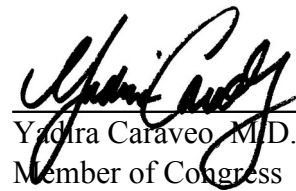
Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress



Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



Ysaura Caraveo, M.D.
Member of Congress



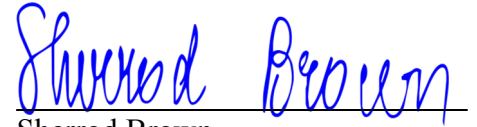
Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



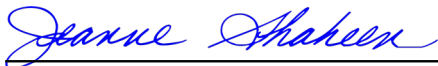
Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



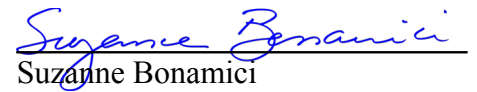
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



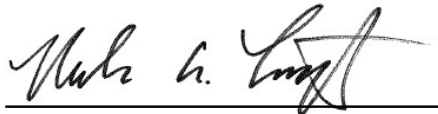
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



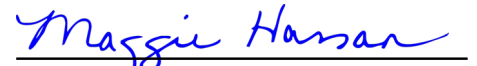
Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator




Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Nicholas A. Langworthy
Member of Congress



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Marie Gluesenkamp Perez
Member of Congress



Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator