

County of Monterey



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September 11, 2023

The Honorable Jimmy Panetta
304 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren
1401 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: H.R. 4127, the Fair Access to Agriculture Disaster Programs Act – SUPPORT

On behalf of the County of Monterey Board of Supervisors, I am writing to express our support for H.R. 4127, the *Fair Access to Agriculture Disaster Programs Act*.

This bill would reduce barriers that producers face in accessing agriculture disaster assistance. The legislation aims to ensure that basic safety net programs for producers are readily available to full-time farmers to get back on their feet following natural disasters.

Current adjusted gross income (AGI) limitations disproportionately prohibit producers with high input costs from participating in certain U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) disaster programs in a meaningful way. These limitations have not kept pace with inflation. Specialty crop producers across the country have acutely experienced this issue and have been denied access to USDA standing disaster programs, most recently in California during this year's winter storms and resulting flooding – which was particularly devastating in the community of Pajaro in the County of Monterey.

We support the approach of your legislation that would exempt the AGI limitation for farms that get 75% of their income from farming or related farming practices (agri-tourism, direct-to-consumer marketing of agricultural products, sale of agricultural equipment owned by person or entity, and other agriculture-related activities, as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture). We also appreciate the applicability to the disaster programs for Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP); Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP); Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP); Tree Assistance Program (TAP); and, the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP).

We are pleased to offer our support for the *Fair Access to Agriculture Disaster Programs Act*, and we thank you for your leadership on this important issue facing Monterey County and other communities across California.

Sincerely,

LUIS A. ALEJO
Chair, Monterey County Board of Supervisors

Cc: The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Senator
The Honorable Alex Padilla, U.S. Senator