



July 5, 2012

Contact: Josh Britton

Phone: (202) 225-5037

E-mail: [Josh.Britton@mail.house.gov](mailto:Josh.Britton@mail.house.gov)

## **Rokita Leads Efforts to Secure Drought Relief for Hoosier Farmers**

(Washington, D.C.) – U.S. Rep. Todd Rokita, along with other members of Indiana’s congressional delegation, urged U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack last week to authorize the emergency use of Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) to provide relief from severe drought conditions.

*“My colleagues and I are calling upon Secretary Vilsack to quickly approve emergency access to CRP lands, which would provide Hoosier farmers additional means to combat these devastating drought conditions. Hoosier farmers are in urgent need of access to these resources if they are to sustain their livestock,”* Rokita said.

The Midwest, including Indiana, is experiencing one of the driest crop seasons on record. More than 40 percent of the state has been officially classified with drought conditions, and many counties are officially experiencing severe drought conditions. Depleted crops are increasing the costs to sustain livestock, and in turn increasing food costs for Hoosier families. Farm animals relying on these crops for food are in danger as supplies are depleted.

Through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), a cost-share program managed by the USDA, reserve grasslands are available as a potential livestock food source. Emergency haying and grazing of these lands may be authorized by the Secretary of Agriculture. If granted, farmers will be able to use these reserves to provide food for their livestock. For more information on the CRP visit:

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=copr&topic=crp>

A copy of the letter signed by Rokita and Reps. Bucshon, Donnelly, and Pence is attached.

-30-



[rokita.house.gov](http://rokita.house.gov)

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

June 29, 2012

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary of Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

This year has been dry throughout the Midwest, including our state of Indiana. Without significant rainfall, conditions will continue to be difficult for Indiana's farmers. As of today, 40 percent of our state has crossed the line into an official drought and many counties have progressed to a "severe drought". Both soybean and corn fields are showing major signs of stress and the crops are suffering immensely, as well as the farm animals that rely on this land. Lower yields also mean higher commodity prices, which in turn could mean higher food prices this winter, not just for corn and other produce, but for the animals that feed on corn, such as hogs, cattle and chickens. It is very clear that the drought has taken its toll on Indiana agriculture.

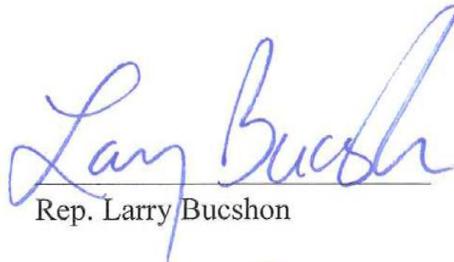
We urge you to promptly consider a request to authorize emergency haying and grazing of all conservation reserve program land also including haying of filter and border strips in all counties that meet the appropriate drought conditions and to give prompt consideration to future requests. This authority can help provide producers another option as they seek to provide adequate hay and forage to their animals during this dry season.

Thank you for your consideration.

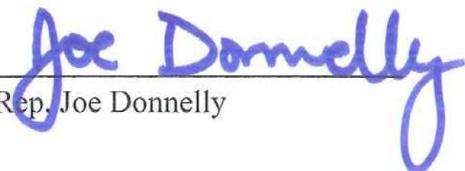
Sincerely,



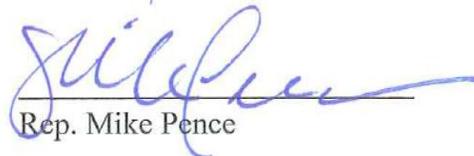
Rep. Todd Rokita



Rep. Larry Bucshon



Rep. Joe Donnelly



Rep. Mike Pence