

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4311

May 27, 2021

The Honorable David Scott
Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Glenn "GT" Thompson
Ranking Member
House Committee on Agriculture
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Scott and Ranking Member Thompson,

Thank you for providing the opportunity to highlight the needs and priorities of farmers and ranchers in Texas' 11th District. I am proud to represent a rural district in West Texas that has over 15 million acres of farm and ranch land worked by diligent producers who not only feed and clothe the State of Texas, but the entire Nation.

As you well know, farm and ranch production systems are not only critical for our local, state, and national economies, but also play a key role in strengthening our National Security. A nation that can feed itself is inherently safer and more secure than one that cannot. The United States – thanks to smart policies like the 2018 Farm Bill – retains the safest, most abundant, and affordable food supply in the world. Producers in West Texas play a large part in this accomplishment, and Congress should continue to prioritize our rural communities and Texas farmers and ranchers.

The following priorities reflect feedback I hear frequently from the communities I represent:

Invest in Rural Broadband: Too many of my constituents live on the wrong side of the digital divide, and rural America needs additional investment for access to high speed internet for work, healthcare, and educational opportunities. Increasing the availability for reliable broadband remains essential for economic prosperity in our communities. I am thankful for Ranking Member Thompson's leadership in introducing the *Broadband For Rural America Act*, and I am proud to be a cosponsor of this important piece of legislation.

Protect the Safety Net: With the ever-increasing challenges for farm and ranch operators, a strong and durable safety net is necessary so producers can continue to provide the food and fiber we depend on. Additionally, I remain hopeful Congress can act to reauthorize the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildfire Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+) to cover disasters from 2020 and 2021.

Predator Control: Last year, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimated that farmers and ranchers sustained roughly \$232 million in livestock death loss due to predation. As producers continue to grapple with effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and regulatory

uncertainty, we must develop more efficient methods to control invasive species and mitigate predation losses to livestock.

Promote Trade Opportunities for U.S. Agriculture: A pro-growth, America-first trade agenda that allows for more made-in-Texas goods to be shipped globally is critical for producers' economic outlook. It is imperative that Congress supports new trade agreements with strong agriculture provisions, as well as pursues vigorous enforcement of the China Phase One Agreement and the recently ratified United-States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).

Fight Policies that Harm Rural America: I remain deeply concerned about President Biden's plan to pursue trillions in crippling tax hikes that will sabotage America's economic recovery. To that end, it is vital Congress preserve stepped-up basis so family owned agricultural operations can be passed along to the next generation and continue to grow our economy. Additionally, burdensome regulatory policies stemming from the outdated Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Obama-era Water-of-the-United States (WOTUS) can be disastrous for agricultural production throughout the country. Cutting bureaucratic red tape and rolling back unnecessary regulations remains paramount.

Thank you, again, for this opportunity. I stand ready to assist you both as we work to find solutions that benefit Texas and the entire nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "August Pfluger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and a long, sweeping underline.

August Pfluger
Member of Congress