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1ST DISTRICT, KANSAS

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AGRICULTURE

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

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Room 244, House Office Building
Ext. 2715

For Release Sunday, A. M.
August 4, 1963

Republican Congressmen have written President Kennedy urging him to join them in a bi-partisan effort to enact wheat legislation for the 1964 crop year. On May 23, 20 Republicans, including the late Hjalmar Nygaard of North Dakota, introduced a voluntary wheat and feed grain program which would apply to the 1964 crop. The basic proposal was the result of the combined efforts of the 20 Republicans based on preliminary research and study by Congressmen Albert H. Quie (Minn.), Don Short (No. Dak.), and Bob Dole (Kan.). All three men are members of the House Committee on Agriculture. Quie is the senior GOP member of the Livestock and Feed Grains Subcommittee; Dole, a member of the Wheat Subcommittee, represents the largest wheat district in the U. S. Congress; and Short is a member of both of these subcommittees.

In addition to Representatives Quie, Dole, Short, and the late Hjalmar Nygaard, other House Members introducing similar legislation and signing the letter to President Kennedy include Representatives Anderson (R-Ill), Avery (R-Kan), Battin (R-Mont), Bromwell (R-Ia), Ellsworth (R-Kan), Harrison (R-Wyo), Horan (R-Wash), Jensen (R-Ia), Kyl (R-Ia), Langen (R-Minn), MacGregor (R-Minn), May (R-Wash), Nelsen (R-Minn), Taft (R-Ohio), Thomson (R-Wis), Berry (R-S. Dak).

The text of the letter is as follows:

August 2, 1963

The Honorable John F. Kennedy
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

It is hoped this letter will clearly express to you the widespread interest in new wheat legislation and urge your cooperation in a unified effort to enact legislation this session of Congress. We believe concerted and positive bi-partisan efforts are needed now, for otherwise the Administration's 1964 wheat program will become operative.

It is generally recognized that the choices your administration proposed to wheat producers for the 1964 crop year were unacceptable. When faced with these two completely unacceptable alternatives, over one-half of our nation's wheat farmers indicated dissatisfaction with the strict control certificate plan on May 21, 1963, but, nonetheless, were left with a program which had been rejected by them twelve times in previous referendums. In brief, the wheat farmers of America were denied the opportunity of choosing between reasonable alternatives. With complete justification they now look to your administration and both parties in Congress for positive action.

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We had been working on a more acceptable wheat program, long before the referendum, and on May 23 introduced legislation which, in our opinion, meets the three tests for new legislation you set forth, May 22, 1963. Other Republican and Democrat members of Congress have also introduced wheat and feedgrain legislation for the 1964 crop year. This, in itself, is an indication of significant interest in the enactment of legislation from members representing the great bulk of wheat and feed grain farmers.

Our voluntary program would raise farm income. The Administration's program scheduled to go into effect for 1964, by contrast, would reduce wheat price supports to \$1.25 per bushel to cooperators, and add to the possibility of the ominous prospects of "\$1.00 wheat," mentioned frequently by the Secretary of Agriculture.

Our voluntary program would decrease government-held stock of surplus grains. The land retirement features of our proposed program would be financed by the use of payment-in-kind. This would be similar to the present voluntary feed grain program which you described in your Agriculture Message this year as a successful program which "has earned wide bi-partisan support."

Our voluntary program would reduce government costs. Based on our studies the cost of our voluntary program, combining wheat and feed grains, would be from \$500-million to \$1-billion less annually than the combined cost of the proposed wheat certificate program that wheat farmers rejected and the 1964 feed grain program.

Now is the time for action, Mr. President, as many farmers will soon be planting their 1964 winter wheat crop. If action is not taken on the tenuous theory wheat farmers will accept strict controls on their 1965 crop, a great, and unnecessary, hardship will be imposed on them in 1964. We therefore respectfully urge your serious and immediate consideration of our proposals. If, however, your Administration is still opposed to enactment of wheat legislation this year then this fact should be made crystal clear to the American wheat producer so he may proceed accordingly with his plans for the 1964 crop year.

Respectfully yours,

(Those signing letter indicated above)
