

News from Senator

# BOB DOLE



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DOLE/KASSEBAUM CALL FOR PROMPT CONSIDERATION  
OF DROUGHT RELIEF MEASURES

WASHINGTON -- KANSAS SENATORS BOB DOLE AND NANCY KASSEBAUM TODAY CALLED FOR QUICK ACTION ON WINTER WHEAT CROP RELIEF MEASURES. IN A LETTER TO COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN PAT LEAHY, BOTH SENATORS STRESSED THAT DESPITE THE RECENT RAINFALL "THE DISASTER IS CERTAIN AND NEEDS ACTION NOW."

FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF SENATOR DOLE'S AND KASSEBAUM'S  
LETTER:

As you know, last Thursday we discussed with Secretary Yeutter the prospects for passing drought assistance legislation for winter wheat farmers. Unlike spring-planted crops, the disaster in the winter wheat belt is certain and needs action now.

Secretary Yeutter indicated that based on the 30 and 90 day weather forecasts, it appears that the recent rains experienced in many farm states reflect what will be a return to normal weather patterns during the growing stages of spring-planted crops. As Secretary Yeutter pointed out, the real problem, already documented, is winter wheat and the impact of persistent dry conditions on forage and pasture land. The recently passed Sense of Congress resolution urged passage of drought-relief legislation in a timely fashion so as to ensure savings from higher prices and lower deficiency payments could be utilized to pay for disaster assistance.

We see several serious risks possible if the Committee does not act quickly. As indicated by USDA's May 3 letter, "It is likely that any outlay reductions due to drought will be incorporated into the next official re-estimate of CCC outlays, to be released in the Mid-Session Review this summer. Drought assistance legislation would, no doubt, be evaluated in light of the updated outlay estimates." It appears that the reduced outlays from lower wheat deficiency payments will not be available after the Mid-Session review, which means action needs to be taken before the August recess.



In addition, July estimates of spring crop conditions could increase outlays for CCC due to a variety of potential factors including larger yields, reduced livestock feeding, lower exports, or higher than projected carryover stocks. This increased spending for other crops would be netted against the reductions in wheat spending, resulting in a smaller overall reduction in CCC spending to offset disaster assistance. Thus, delay is risky if CCC costs of other program crops increase.

A re-estimate of crop conditions incorporated into the Mid-Session review, increased outlays in other program crops, a potential Gramm-Rudman-Hollings sequester or difficulty in meeting reconciliation targets, would all threaten to disrupt consideration of a budget-neutral disaster assistance package.

Since it is clear that there exists sufficient savings to assist winter crops if we act now, any delay in addressing the existing winter crops' disaster in lieu of addressing an unrealized disaster at a future date, seems to ignore the tragedy of wheat farmers that are clearly hurting and in need of assistance now and jeopardizes the "reduced CCC outlays" or savings that could offset such disaster assistance.

Again, we urge the Committee to act quickly on this issue and look forward to working with you in the days ahead.