



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

GOVERNOR NED LAMONT

July 24, 2023

The Honorable Thomas Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Subject: Request for a Secretarial Disaster Declaration

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

In accordance with 7 CFR 759, I request a Secretarial Disaster Designation for all counties in the State of Connecticut – Fairfield, Hartford, Litchfield, Middlesex, New London, New Haven, Tolland, and Windham – due to the significant damage that occurred from the recent heavy rainfall that caused significant flooding along the Connecticut River and other waterways.

At this point in July, Connecticut has received 10.74 inches of rain, which is 423% of our normal July rainfall. In addition to the rain we received directly, the rainfall along the Connecticut River Valley in particular contributed significantly to flooding issues. The Connecticut River crested at 21.08 feet (5.08 feet above flood stage) in Hartford just after midnight on Thursday, July 13.

According to loss reports submitted to the Connecticut Department of Agriculture, 27 farms estimate losses totaling over 1,500 acres of farmland and nearly \$21 million in lost sales revenue. This flooding is in addition to two previous frost events this year (February and May) that resulted in 1,077 acres impacted with estimated losses totaling \$8.4 million.

A Secretarial designation will open the availability of low-interest USDA Farm Service Agency emergency loans for eligible producers in the approved counties. I request an expedited declaration and additional ad hoc disaster programming and funds be made available to Connecticut farmers and landowners that have been negatively impacted by these events.

As I have spoken to farmers impacted by this flooding, it has become clear that the current USDA risk management tools are not adequate to support small and diversified farm operations. These farms are underinsured, or uninsured, and the programs available are not sufficient to provide the support necessary to manage years like this one. With the 2023 Farm Bill

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negotiations underway, I respectfully ask that these federal programs be modified to better support this important industry in our state.

I would also welcome you to visit Connecticut and meet with our farmers on the challenges they face with crop insurance tools. We are deeply proud of our agricultural heritage and the contributions Connecticut farmers make to our food system, economy, and ecosystems.

Thank you for your consideration of my request. If your staff have any questions or require additional information or documentation, please contact Connecticut's Commissioner of Agriculture, Bryan Hurlburt at bryan.hurlburt@ct.gov or at [\(860\) 713-2501](tel:8607132501).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ned Lamont". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ned" and the last name "Lamont" clearly legible.

Ned Lamont
Governor