

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

November 4, 2013

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Chairwoman  
Senate Agriculture Committee  
328 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Ranking Member  
Senate Agriculture Committee  
328 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Cochran:

As conference negotiations with the House of Representatives move forward on the 2013 Farm Bill, we are writing in strong support of the language included in Section 1462 of the Senate bill, which aims to jumpstart milk pricing reforms.

This language would require the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to begin the hearing process to restructure the current, flawed milk pricing system and to release recommendations to Congress. Specifically, Section 1462 would require the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a pre-hearing procedure and solicit submissions of alternate Class III milk pricing formulas by interested parties. Those submissions deemed sufficient to warrant further investigation would be evaluated and serve as the basis for a hearing. Examining price formulas in this participatory and transparent manner aims to ensure that fair and equitable systems that adequately compensate producers are duly considered. Such a review has been recommended by the Dairy Industry Advisory Committee (a USDA created entity) and is widely supported by dairy producers.

It is our hope that insight gained by this process will lead to new solutions that stabilize the price of milk and provide certainty for our dairy producers, so that they can grow their businesses and help strengthen our nation's rural economies. Thank you for your leadership and for your consideration of our request to ensure Section 1462 is retained. Please do not hesitate to contact us, or have your staff contact Kathryn Stahlberg (Gillibrand) or Olivia Kurtz (Collins) in our offices, if there is anything we can do to be of assistance.

Sincerely,



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Kirsten E. Gillibrand  
United States Senator



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Susan M. Collins  
United States Senator