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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

April 16, 2014

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

I write to you today to urge you to grant disaster declarations for Lewis and St. Lawrence counties due to extreme flooding. This tragic weather event has led to many bridge and road closures, which has isolated numerous dairy farms. While the emergency is on-going, my office has learned of the loss and contamination of feed, bunker silos and wells on many farms. Currently, evacuations of livestock are being attempted, so there is a risk of significant livestock loss as well.

Cornel Cooperative Extension and county emergency managers are responding to the on-going crisis, which is of utmost importance in the short term. The response once the flooding event is over will require the assistance of USDA disaster programs requiring your disaster declaration. Once the full scope of the disaster is known, our farmers and these impacted communities will require the quick distribution of applicable low interest emergency loans, Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP), Emergency Conservation Program (ECP), Emergency Watershed Program (EWP), Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, & Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP), Livestock Forage Program (LFP), and other relevant disaster funds.

This critical situation in Lewis and St. Lawrence counties in New York State deserves immediate coordinated attention at the local, state and federal level. I look forward to working together to make available the necessary USDA disaster funds swiftly and efficiently to assist our farmers and impacted communities as they rebuild.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator