

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 1, 2020

The Honorable Jovita Carranza
Administrator
U.S. Small Business Administration
409 3rd St. SW
Washington, D.C. 20416

Dear Administrator Carranza,

I write to express my continued concern with the Small Business Administration's (SBA) implementation of the Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL), particularly in regard to the program's eligibility regarding farmers and agricultural producers in Oregon and across the country.

It has been brought to my attention that despite the additional \$50 billion in funds allocated to the SBA for the EIDL program, the agency has declined to take on new applicants, instead processing the backlog of applicants that accumulated over the last month. While I understand the SBA is operating on a first-come, first-served basis, this decision functionally renders EIDL funds inaccessible for agricultural producers.

As you are aware, Congress explicitly made farmers and agricultural producers with fewer than 500 employees eligible for EIDL and the Emergency Economic Injury Grant (EEIG) in the recently passed CARES 3.5 package; this provision was in direct response to the SBA's failure to allow these essential producers to participate in this much-needed funding from the start. By failing to open up applications to newly eligible agricultural entities, the SBA is effectively nullifying the express direction of Congress to make agricultural producers eligible for these programs.

Our farmers and agricultural producers are keeping the United States fed during this crisis, while at the same time dealing with significant challenges of their own. I urge you to take the necessary steps to ensure they are given the opportunity to apply for EIDL and EEIG funds as intended by Congress. Please let me know immediately if you believe you will run out of funds before you are able to re-open the application portal.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator