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Congress of the United States
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September 2, 2016

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
US Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250-0002

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

I am writing to express my support for the application submitted by the New York State Farm Service Agency to the US Department of Agriculture seeking a D2 drought disaster declaration for Jefferson and Lewis Counties of my congressional district (NY21), and to respectfully request that this declaration process be expedited.

As you are aware, we have been experiencing a sustained drought in Northern New York, which has had, and will continue to have, a negative impact on the agricultural sector of my district. It is my understanding that unless the region receives significant and sustained precipitation over the coming months, it is likely that we will not see a groundwater recharge until next spring. In speaking with many of my constituents, both farmers and representatives of the agricultural community, I have fielded serious concerns about the absence of groundwater resources, the need for improved access to water, and a potential shortage of forage for cattle as we approach the winter season. The impact of these shortages will be devastating to the farming families in Jefferson and Lewis Counties and to the North Country economy as a whole.

I ask that you give this application your most serious consideration, consistent with current laws, rules, regulations, and agency policy, and again, ***I respectfully request this application be processed as expeditiously as possible.*** I appreciate your time in this matter. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact Madeline Donovan in my Watertown office at 315-782-3150 or madeline.donovan@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



ELISE STEFANIK
Member of Congress

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