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UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ROSA L. DELAURO

3RD DISTRICT, CONNECTICUT

September 17, 2019

CO-CHAIR, DEMOCRATIC STEERING AND  
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COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Secretary  
United States Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

I write to request comprehensive details surrounding the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) unprecedented and seemingly unlimited use of funds under the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) Charter Act.

Within the last year, your Department has directed \$28 billion in CCC funds to be used in agricultural support programs. For context, that amount is larger than the entire discretionary budget Congress appropriates to USDA each fiscal year.

That is not to take away from the current plight of American agriculture. Across the country, farmers and ranchers are feeling the direct effects of President Trump's ill-conceived and often chaotic trade policy. I, along with many others, am concerned about the long-term impacts of the current trade conflict with China. On the world stage, our country is more isolated than before: 'America First' has too often meant 'America Alone.'

Yet, the Administration's broad and sustained use of CCC funds for agricultural programs are far beyond the size and scope of Congress's original intent. Many leading experts have rightfully called into the question the legality of using CCC funds to distribute such large amounts of assistance.

Moreover, much of the support that was promised to struggling farmers has instead flowed to those with no need of government assistance. To date, we only know a small fraction of where this money has gone. We do know, for example, the corrupt, foreign-owned meat processor JBS has received approximately \$90 million and fifteen advisors to President Trump's 2016 presidential campaign have received at least \$2.2 million.

Yet, despite repeated Congressional requests, the Department has failed to disclose further details of program recipients. That lack of transparency regarding a \$28 billion federal program is outrageous.

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As such, I ask that you immediately provide Members of Congress with complete information on the distribution of funds to program recipients under each component of the funds used under CCC. Additionally, you should provide documentation of how USDA is ensuring against waste, fraud, and abuse as well as an estimate of the improper payment rate for each program.

Going forward, American farmers deserve transparency and to know these payments are going to them and not corporate agribusinesses. Thus, it is essential that Members of Congress be briefed as soon as possible as to the Administration's future plans to continue distributing direct assistance using CCC funds.

Sincerely,



ROSA L. DeLAURO  
Member of Congress