



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

MAR 12 2018

The Honorable Collin Peterson
Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
1010 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Ranking Member Peterson:

Section 1613 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (the 2002 Farm Bill) requires that the Secretary of Agriculture submit an Equitable Relief Report by February 1 of each year to the House Committee on Agriculture and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. The 2017 Equitable Relief Report provides the number of requests for equitable relief filed with USDA by participants in USDA programs pursuant to sections 1613(b) and (e) of the 2002 Farm Bill and section 278(d) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 during the previous calendar year and the disposition of those requests.

The enclosed report shows that program participants requested equitable relief in 762 cases filed with USDA: USDA granted 631 of these requests and denied 128. Three (3) requests were mooted by USDA granting other forms of relief to the program participants; and in three cases there was no authority to grant equitable relief. The enclosed report provides a detailed breakdown of these numbers.

If you have any further questions, please have a member of your staff contact the Office of Congressional Relations at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to Chairman Michael Conaway.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sonny Perdue". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Sonny Perdue
Secretary

Enclosure



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

MAR 12 2018

The Honorable Pat Roberts
Chairman
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
United State Senate
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

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Sincerely,

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Sonny Perdue
Secretary

Enclosure



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MAR 12 2018

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
United States Senate
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Ranking Member Stabenow:

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Chairman
Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

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Secretary

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Department of Agriculture 2017 Equitable Relief Report

Section 1613 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (the 2002 Farm Bill) grants the Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Directors and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationists the authority to provide equitable relief to FSA participants in price, income support, production, or loss assistance programs and NRCS conservation programs. This relief is subject to financial limitations. Section 1613 also grants this authority to the Secretary of Agriculture, without any financial limitation, and the Secretary of Agriculture has delegated this statutory authority to the FSA Administrator and the Chief of NRCS. To qualify for relief, a participant must demonstrate that he or she acted in good faith to comply with program requirements. Forms of relief include the retention of benefits received under the program, continuity of benefits, re-enrollment of land for conservation, or other appropriate relief.

Section 278(d) of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 grants the Director of the National Appeals Division the same authority to provide equitable relief to program participants as provided to the Secretary.

The following table reflects information for calendar year 2017 as required by section 1613 of the 2002 Farm Bill.

Farm Service Agency

Number of Requests for Equitable Relief:	479
Number of Requests Denied:	43
Number of Requests Granted:	436

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Number of Requests for Equitable Relief:	79
Number of Requests Denied:	10
Number of Requests Granted:	69

National Appeals Division

Number of Requests for Equitable Relief:	204
Number of Requests Denied:	75
Number of Requests Granted:	126
(Including 73 cases involving money: And 50 involving extensions of time, 3 Granted – Other)	
No Authority to Grant:	3