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October 21, 2020

Chairman John Hoeven
U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Ranking Member Jeff Merkley
U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Hoeven and Ranking Member Merkley:

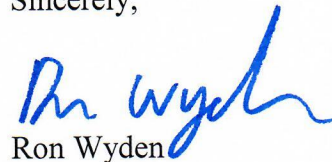
I write to request additional disaster assistance through the Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program (WHIP) for winegrape growers who have been impacted by the wildfire smoke that occurred during 2020.

As Ranking Member Merkley knows firsthand, our home state's wine industry has been hurt by the catastrophic wildfires, leaving many winegrape growers unable to sell their smoke-tainted product. Exposure to smoke particles can dramatically change the flavor of wine grapes, rendering them unusable in the winemaking process. The WHIP program is designed to compensate producers in this very situation, and it is critical that Congress provide this necessary assistance to winegrape growers impacted by natural disasters in 2020.

In the 2019 disaster relief supplemental appropriations bill (P.L. 116-20), Congress provided \$3 million for winegrowers whose grapes were impacted by wildfires in 2018 and 2019. Due to the fact that wildfires have burned millions of acres of land throughout the West and caused heavy layers of smoke in 2020, winegrape growers require the same assistance.

I thank you both for your continued efforts and commitment to address the wildfires in Oregon and your past efforts to secure WHIP assistance for wine grapes damaged by wildfire smoke.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator

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