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November 30, 2018

Chairman Richard Shelby  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Room S-128, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Vice Chairman Patrick Leahy  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Room S-128, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Vice Chairman Leahy:

To assist winegrape growers who remain at risk of wildfire smoke related losses, I write to request an extension of the 2017 Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program (WHIP) and additional funding for smoke exposure and winegrape research.

As you are aware, 2017 was a historic year for natural disasters, including wildfires, with Congress appropriating more than \$3 billion in disaster relief in the 2018 Omnibus spending bill. That legislation included the WHIP, which is designed to provide a measure of compensation for producers affected by natural disasters. Winegrape growers experienced heavy smoke due to the 2017 wildfire season, which exposed winegrapes to particles that affect the taste of wine and which ultimately resulted in heavy losses for winegrape growers. WHIP was necessary assistance for these producers.

Like 2017, the 2018 wildfire season subjected winegrapes to persistent exposure to heavy smoke. Many purchasers have informed growers that their smoke-tainted grapes are not acceptable for winemaking, forcing growers to leave their grapes on the vine or sell them for vastly reduced prices. Additionally, the effect of smoke exposure on winegrapes is relatively unknown, which further exacerbates the economic damage inflicted on producers during bad smoke years.

Given that winegrape growers are, yet again, facing substantial financial losses I request an extension of WHIP in any year-end bill. I also request \$5.25 million of new funding to support research on the effects of smoke exposure to winegrapes, which will help limit future losses associated with smoke exposure.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden  
U.S. Senator

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