

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

July 22, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
United States Capitol  
H-232  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
United States Capitol  
H-204  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy:

We write to you today to bring our concerns about America's agricultural fairs to your attention and ask that you consider the inclusion of relief measures in any future COVID-relief measure considered in the House.

According to the International Association of Fairs and Expositions (IAFE), each year the operation of agricultural fairs results in \$4.67 billion for the U.S. economy and supports thousands of jobs. About 2,000 fairs are held in North America each year, and large fairs can admit more than a million visitors over the course of a week or two.

Fairs, like so many other industries in the U.S., have suffered tremendous financial losses as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. IAFE estimates a loss of revenue exceeding \$3.7 billion to fair organizations so far this year based upon the cancellation of facility events and their annual fair. For the period of March through May alone, a survey of IAFE member fairs reported a loss of \$22 million per month because of the cancellation of events at their facilities. Current projections are that more than 80% of the fairs across America will not be held in 2020.

State and county fairs are a primary source for the promotion of U.S. agribusiness. Fairs promote and market U.S. agribusiness products and services, develop and administer programs to assist agribusinesses in locating or expanding throughout the country, and contribute to the development of several or many phases of agriculture or agribusiness by conducting educational programs, activities, demonstrations, contests, and exhibits. They exhibit the equipment and animals associated with agriculture and animal husbandry, and livestock shows are prominent at many state fairs.

Fairs also encourage and develop the next generation of America's food producers. Agricultural producers in rural America represent less than 1% of the U.S. population, and with the average of a farmer being 57 years old, it is imperative for us to engage and encourage young people to pursue agricultural careers. By cultivating a passion for agriculture in students and supporting beginning farmers and ranchers, fairs help build the future of agriculture. These exhibitions demonstrate to the public and the farming community, that we do not take for granted the work they do to feed us all.

In times of emergency, fairgrounds can also provide areas of shelter and refuge. They can serve as temporary evacuation and medical sites for victims and livestock following disasters such as earthquakes, wildfires, tornadoes, hurricanes, and floods. Fair operators are often responsible for the costs of maintaining fairgrounds as critical infrastructure so they are ready when disasters strike.

In response to the financial distress the COVID-19 crisis has placed on America's fairs, and given the importance they play in the promotion of and development of America's Agribusiness, it is imperative that financially stressed fairs be provided a lifeline during these difficult times.

We support America's agricultural fairs and respectfully ask that you join us by considering the inclusion of relief measures for this uniquely American industry in any future COVID-relief measure considered in the House.

Sincerely,



Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress

/s/

Marcy Kaptur  
Member of Congress

/s/

Salud Carbajal  
Member of Congress

/s/

Jim Hagedorn  
Member of Congress

/s/

TJ Cox  
Member of Congress

/s/

Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress



Billy Long  
Member of Congress

/s/

Jim Costa  
Member of Congress

/s/

Angie Craig  
Member of Congress

/s/

Collin C. Peterson  
Member of Congress

/s/

Cindy Axne  
Member of Congress

/s/

Dave Loebsack  
Member of Congress

/s/

John Rose  
Member of Congress

/s/

David Trone  
Member of Congress

/s/

Josh Gottheimer  
Member of Congress