

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 19, 2024

The Honorable Isabel Casillas Guzman
Administrator, United States Small Business Administration
409 3rd St., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Administrator Isabel Casillas Guzman,

We write in support of the disaster declaration request submitted by Governor Jeff Landry in response to drought conditions across Louisiana in 2023. Many industries throughout Louisiana suffered immensely due to drought, as well as a prolonged saltwater intrusion, which negatively impacted crawfish producers as well as downstream businesses. Crawfish processors, wholesalers, boilers, and other related enterprises are not eligible for agriculture relief programs, but their livelihoods are dependent on a robust crawfish crop. In response, we request a disaster declaration from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).

Access to relief programs, such as the Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL), through the SBA for non-agriculture members of Louisiana's economy is essential to their survival. According to the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Louisiana's commercial supply of crawfish has an estimated \$300 million impact on the state's economy. It is important to note that the entire supply chain has seen and will continue to see major financial losses this season because of severe deficits in crawfish production, with Louisiana State University's AgCenter estimating losses in production to be \$140 million.

We urge the SBA to assist Louisiana businesses that do not have access to agriculture disaster assistance by offering the necessary tools and assistance to navigate the application process, ensuring eligible stakeholders have access to critical financial assistance. Additionally, we urge the SBA to extend the deadline for Economic Injury filing through the end of the crawfish season to allow downstream businesses ample time to accurately calculate their losses. We appreciate your attention to this important matter and look forward to working with you to protect Louisiana's crawfish aquaculture industry and small businesses.

Respectfully,



Clay Higgins
Member of Congress



Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House



Steve Scalise
House Majority Leader



Bill Cassidy, M.D.
U.S. Senator



John Kennedy
U.S. Senator



Garret Graves
Member of Congress



Julia Letlow, Ph.D.
Member of Congress



Troy Carter
Member of Congress