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The Honorable Gov. Nikki R. Haley
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Dear Gov. Nikki R. Haley:

As you are aware, the recent flooding has devastated the Lowcountry of South Carolina in many ways—homes lost, people displaced, and significant damage inflicted upon our infrastructure. Images of these scenes are all over the news, and are certainly heartbreaking. In addition to all of the personal property damage, there is another segment of our state that has been devastated by this historic flood, a segment that accounts for the biggest portion of South Carolina's economy.

I'm talking about agriculture.

The devastation to the land and to our crops is tremendous. At this point, Agriculture Commissioner Hugh Weathers has estimated \$500 million in agricultural losses to our state. I believe this number is too low—not just because it's too soon to tell while some fields remain flooded—but also because farming is different than other devastated sectors. Farming is a multi-year process, one with many input costs that must be laid out well in advance of recouping them.

For me, as a farmer of corn, soybeans, cotton, and peanuts in Colleton County, recovering from the summer drought, followed by the historic flood, will be like running a marathon rather than a sprint. It will take us years to dig out, and we need your help. We cannot take on any more debt, even if it is federally-backed USDA money. *We cannot borrow our way out of this.*

Farmers are counting on you, Gov. Nikki R. Haley, to take the bold step of bringing direct disaster relief funding to our devastated ag sector. Without farming, small rural communities, who rely upon farming as their economic hub, will dry up. And we want to stay in farming. It's our way of life—it's what we know and love to do, and will continue to do with your help.

We are grateful for the recent sunshine, which allows us to assess the full damage as the water continues to recede. So far, we are finding crops that are mildewed, rotten, and otherwise an economic loss. Many of us have lost equipment, livestock, and infrastructure, too. We implore you to please realize the long-term effect of this disaster. Crop insurance doesn't save us from these types of situations—it's a safety net, when what we need right now is emergency assistance. We need your help.

Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (843-893-6484). Or (jgfarms@lowcountry.com).

Sincerely yours,

John Graham
Smoaks
Colleton County

