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December 8, 2015

The Honorable Nikki R. Haley
Governor, State of South Carolina
PO Box 12267
Columbia, South Carolina 29211

Dear Governor Haley,

As Christmas approaches and we take time to enjoy the holidays with our families and loved ones, we pause to reflect upon what has proved to be a difficult year for countless South Carolinians. We have indeed faced challenges that we never thought imaginable. With each challenge, we have witnessed our citizens' resiliency, strength, determination, and love and compassion for one another enable us to collectively rise to the occasion and begin to recover in the wake of disaster and loss.

The unprecedented October flooding is one challenge that we will continue to deal with for months and likely years to come.

Recently I have been fortunate to serve on the Special Senate Committee Regarding Flood Relief Efforts in South Carolina. As you know, we have heard testimony from multiple state agency experts during our meetings. We also continue to listen to constituents in our respective districts when we are at home, and we strive to assist them in any way that we can.

Simply stated, South Carolina farmers were hit as hard as anyone by October's historic floods. Record temperatures and severe drought had already hampered crop yield during the summer. Flooding brought exponential (and utterly unpredictable) devastation to our farmers, resulting in unprecedented crop loss and prevented planting. The damage is widespread and will impact the agriculture industry in South Carolina for years to come.

I am proud to represent many farmers in Sumter, Lee, Kershaw, and Richland counties. The agricultural industry in South Carolina has endured estimated damages in excess of \$375,000,000 from the October flood; of that, some \$250,000,000 are damages which are ineligible for benefits from insurance or other relief. I have heard the plights and the pleas for assistance from farmers in my area. Without some form of disaster relief, many of their operations will likely cease – and that would be bad for our state. Agribusiness is unique and quite distinguishable from other sectors of our economy. In a lot of

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cases, farmers find themselves in situations with very high risk and relatively low yield. Many of them take a chance so that South Carolinians and Americans can have food. We should never take that for granted, and as elected officials representing farmers, it is our responsibility to do what we can to assist them.

As such, I encourage you to request that our South Carolina Congressional Delegation seek funding to assist our farmers who have been irreparably damaged by October's flood waters. We must find relief for our community of South Carolina farmers, as they are vital to our state. Based upon the information which is available to me, I believe that reaching out to our congressional delegation would be the only hope for such relief.

My understanding is that we are working on a very tight timeframe within which to seek assistance from our elected officials in Congress, so I am hopeful that you will move forward with this request immediately.

Thank you in advance for your kind consideration of this request.

Respectfully,



THOMAS McELVEEN

cc: Senator Lindsey Graham/290 Russell Senate Office Building/Washington, DC 20510
Senator Tim Scott/167 Russell Senate Office Building/Washington, DC 20510
Representative James Clyburn/242 Cannon House Office Building/Washington, DC 20515
Representative Joe Wilson/2229 Rayburn House Office Building/Washington, DC 20515
Representative Mick Mulvaney/2419 Rayburn House Office Building/Washington, DC 20515