Washington, DC 20515

September 25, 2018

Dear Congressman:

On behalf of the Minnesota Corn Growers Association, I am writing to urge that a farm bill be enacted prior to Congress breaking in October.

As you are well aware, the current farm bill expires on September 30. Press reports indicate that some Members of Congress believe completion of a farm bill in December is a likely scenario. We believe completion of this legislation this week or next is critically important.

A new farm bill would provide much needed certainty to Minnesota farmers, and our local lending institutions, during very uncertain times. USDA recently forecast 2018 net farm income to decline by another 13 percent from 2017, to $65.7 billion, half of the 2013 level of $123 billion. These conditions are exacerbated by the impacts of retaliatory tariffs, which have cost corn farmers 44 cents per bushel—a $6.3 billion loss to corn farmers alone.

In this environment, the support provided by the farm bill, including the Market Access Program (MAP) and Foreign Market Development (FMD) Programs, is of increasing importance to Minnesota farmers. Unfortunately, if the farm bill is not finished by September 30, FMD funding would be interrupted, cutting off vital market development resources. Farmers also need a much stronger safety net under the commodity title.

We are gratified to hear in media reports that Members of Congress from both political parties and chambers of Congress believe there is no issue that is insurmountable in completing a new farm bill. Given this, we believe there is no good reason for delay.

A new farm bill, signed into law before Congress leaves in October, would go a long way to easing economic difficulties across Minnesota and providing certainty to local farmers facing challenging times. The Minnesota Corn Growers Association appreciates your strong support of the farm bill and stands ready to be of assistance to meet the goal of an on-time enactment of the farm bill.

Sincerely,

Kirby Hettver
President
Minnesota Corn Growers Association