

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

January 11, 2023

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary of Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

We write following the deadly winter storm that recently devastated large areas of the communities we represent. From December 23 to December 26, Winter Storm Elliott lashed Western New York, tragically resulting in dozens of deaths and billions in economic damage, including to many family farms. In response to the devastation, we ask that you immediately act under the full range of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's authorities and programs to ensure affected farmers, producers, and rural businesses receive the relief they need to fully recover.

Winter Storm Elliott produced over four feet of snow in addition to widespread hurricane and tropical storm force winds. This devastation caused at least 40 deaths across the region<sup>1</sup> and over \$5.4 billion in losses nationwide.<sup>2</sup> On top of these losses, countless businesses, especially in our region's extensive agriculture sector, continue to suffer from storm-related supply chain disruptions, loss of product, and other issues. This is devastating to our agricultural producers, who are already struggling with record inflation, high energy and fertilizer prices, and the existing supply chain dysfunctions. It is imperative for our local and national economy that we provide these producers the help they need to quickly recover from this severe winter storm.

We therefore ask that you use the extensive tools at the Department of Agriculture's disposal to facilitate the timely distribution of aid and assistance to affected businesses. We look forward to working with you to ensure Western New York's farmers and agricultural producers quickly recover from the devastation of Winter Storm Elliott.

Sincerely,

  
CLAUDIA TENNEY  
Member of Congress

  
NICK LANGWORTHY  
Member of Congress

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.wunderground.com/article/news/news/2022-12-26-winter-storm-elliott-buffalo-blizzard-erie-county>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.insurancejournal.com/news/national/2022/12/29/701099.htm>