

United States Senate

March 25, 2009

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

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

The Department of Agriculture provides critical support to farmers and ranchers in my state through its various farm credit, conservation and benefit programs. I strongly believe that all producers, regardless of race, ethnicity, or gender should have equal access to these vital USDA programs.

In sec. 14011 of the 2008 Farm Bill, Congress stated its desire that pending claims and class actions brought against the department by socially disadvantaged farmers or ranchers be resolved in an expeditious and just manner. I am writing to ask that you take notice of this provision in the farm bill and continue to make it your priority to end discrimination in the USDA.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,


Jeff Bingaman
United States Senator

JB/dja