

DAVID LOEBSACK
2ND DISTRICT, IOWA

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ARMED SERVICES
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HEALTH, EMPLOYMENT, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS
EARLY CHILDHOOD, ELEMENTARY
AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1502

January 13, 2012

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

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

I write to bring to your attention concerns communities in Iowa and I have with respect to the proposed closing of USDA offices in Iowa. While I understand these decisions have not been finalized, I thought it important to provide you with information on the potential impact of these closings on the agricultural community in the area I represent.

As a result of budget cuts to USDA passed by Congress, I appreciate the difficult choices you must make with respect to how USDA can fulfill its mission of furthering American agriculture and strengthening rural economies. I also understand USDA has performed well in the past in preserving a necessary level of service and resources to our nation's farmers and am confident this will continue in the future.

However, the proposed closing of USDA offices in Centerville, Leon, Creston, and Fairfield, Iowa risks limiting the availability of and access to a range of services that the backbones of our rural economies, farmers, frequently use and reducing the efficiency of farm assistance and conservation programs. Many of the programs that are critical to Iowa farmers and the economic development of Iowa's rural communities are also complicated.

Closing these offices threatens to make these programs less accessible to the farmers who need them, hurting not only individual farmers but local economies as well. In addition, with the projected number and intensity of disasters and severe weather events predicted to increase, we need to ensure adequate resources are devoted to ensuring farmers have access to people who know how to get them the help they need when disasters strike, as they did last year in these same areas in Iowa.

There are few things more important than ensuring Iowa and the U.S. remains the most effective agricultural producer in the world and ensuring an adequate supply of food. As we increase our agricultural productivity, output, and exports and feed more of the world, USDA's workload will only increase from its already record highs and demand for USDA services will only increase. I hope you will carefully review the strong concerns of Iowa's rural and agricultural communities regarding the proposed office closings and the potential impact they could have on Iowa farmers and rural towns.

I again respectfully urge your consideration of these points and urge you to re-evaluate these proposed closings. Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dave Loeb sack", written in a cursive style.

Dave Loeb sack
Iowa's Second District