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## Congress of the United States House of Representatives

May 26, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

I write to express my strong objection to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) decision to award Farmers to Families Food Box Program distribution contracts to entities lacking the operational capability to receive, store and distribute requested food for families struggling with food insecurity.

I am specifically requesting that you immediately issue a stop work order for CRE8AD8 in San Antonio, as you have reportedly already done with California Avocados Direct, and that thereafter you promptly cancel this contract. This contract was issued without a credible background check with a company not licensed to perform and with no work history indicating a capacity to perform at a time of urgent public need for competent delivery. CRE8AD8 was given until June 30 to complete distribution of the 750,000 boxes in a seven-state region, but to date it has apparently failed to distribute a single box.

Images from San Antonio brought national attention to the record number of families facing food insecurity as a result of the economic fallout of the ongoing pandemic. Those with children represent some of the most impacted – recent reports show two in five households with children 12 and under are food insecure. At a time when families need help the most, USDA should be prioritizing funding for experienced contractors with established community relationships to ensure there are no unnecessary delays to much needed support. A family cannot eat an IOU. Poor performing, inexperienced contractors risk delaying food delivery or even delivering spoiled dangerous food to families who need help now.

USDA awarding 198 contracts in a week involved a process which failed to protect taxpayers, the hungry, and producers with food going to waste. In addition to seeking prompt answers to all of the questions raised by House Agriculture Subcommittee Chairs Rep. Stacey Plaskett, Rep. Jim Costa, and Rep. Marcia Fudge in their May 22 letter expressing similar concerns, I seek your responses to the following in order to determine how you are assuring that flaws with other companies do not create similar problems:

1. How did USDA ensure awardees had established relationships with other supply chain subcontractors needed to execute the Farmers to Families Food Box Program? Describe in full the background check done for each awardee and provide the specific results of your background check on CRE8AD8.

2. Prior to awarding contracts, what specific steps, if any, did USDA take to ensure awardees had secured facilities to protect food safety, including refrigerated transportation and storage?
3. What is USDA doing now to ensure food safety during the contract period?
4. What actions has USDA taken for awardees who are not fulfilling contractual obligations?
5. Which Farmers to Families Food Box Program distribution contracts have already been terminated?
6. Under the contract awarded to CRE8AD8, was there a daily and weekly distribution requirement to ensure families are not waiting on food throughout the approximately six-week contract period?
7. What steps have already been undertaken, if any, to ensure that families receive the food that CRE8AD8 has been unable to deliver since the program's distribution period began May 15?

For the sake of those Texans who through no fault of their own rely on these meals, I look forward to your prompt action on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lloyd Doggett". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Lloyd Doggett