United States Senate
Washington D.C. 20510

September 11, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Rollins,

I am writing today to express the financial pressure that rapidly rising diesel prices are placing on Kansas farmers and ranchers and to request that you collaborate across the Administration and Congress to secure funds in order to provide temporary, targeted relief for the additional diesel costs that agricultural producers are incurring during the 2026 harvest season.

Thanks to your leadership alongside other members of the Trump Administration and Congress, expanded domestic and international market opportunities have provided needed support to American agriculture. Those gains, however, are now at risk of being consumed by sharply higher energy costs. On September 7, the national average retail price of diesel reached $5.967 per gallon.[1] Most producers made their planting, financing, and marketing decisions months ago, before this latest price spike, and they must now absorb substantial unplanned fuel costs during one of the most diesel-intensive periods of the year.

While I appreciate the continued partnership we have had in expanding the energy supply through biodiesel and ethanol production, these price pressures reflect both continued instability in the Middle East and exceptionally tight diesel supplies. The U.S. Energy Information Administration forecasts that domestic distillate fuel inventories will fall below 100 million barrels in September and remain below the five-year low through the end of 2026 and most of 2027.[2] At the same time, U.S. refineries operated at 97.8 percent of capacity during the week ending September 4, leaving limited near-term room to materially increase production.[3] These conditions threaten to erode producers' margins and profits just as agricultural demand for diesel peaks during harvest.

[1] Weekly Petroleum Status Report, September 10, 2026, https://www.eia.gov/petroleum/supply/weekly/pdf/wpsrall.pdf, 5.
[2] Short-Term Energy Outlook, September 9, 2026, https://www.eia.gov/outlooks/steo/.
[3] Weekly Petroleum Status Report, September 10, 2026, https://www.eia.gov/petroleum/supply/weekly/pdf/wpsrall.pdf, 5.

As you consider this request, I urge you to structure any assistance so that it is temporary, targeted, and fiscally responsible. Priority should be given to producers who are actively engaged in farming or ranching and who have been exposed to extraordinary fuel costs during the 2026 production year.

A stable and secure food supply depends on financially viable farmers and ranchers. Helping producers withstand this sudden and largely unforeseen cost shock is therefore both an agricultural and national-security imperative. I respectfully ask that you consider this request with urgency and stand ready to work with you on a responsible approach.

Sincerely,

Roger Marshall, M.D.
United States Senator