NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WHEAT GROWERS

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November 10, 2026

The Honorable Richard Fordyce
Undersecretary for Farm Production and Conservation
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Undersecretary Fordyce:

On behalf of the families who grow wheat across this nation, thank you for your leadership and the Administration's commitment to providing assistance through the Harvest Fuel Relief Program. This relief comes at an important time for wheat growers facing elevated operating costs and difficult market conditions. We appreciate your recognition of these challenges and USDA's efforts to deliver timely support to farm families.

As USDA develops the program's implementation guidance, the National Association of Wheat Growers (NAWG) requests an opportunity for our grower leaders and staff to meet with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and other appropriate USDA officials. Engagement will help ensure the program accounts for the diversity of wheat farming operations and provides clear, consistent guidance to growers and county offices.

We respectfully request USDA's consideration of the following implementation priorities:

Maintaining Farmer Bridge Assistance payment structure. We appreciated the Farmer Bridge Assistance payment's simple structure and focus on per-acre losses. As recent market disruptions have impacted more than just fuel prices, we believe that using the Economic Research Service's cost of production estimates along with World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates for yields and prices, best captures true economic hurt experienced currently by each crop. We ask that USDA maintain FBA's structure in its Harvest Fuel Relief Program.

We also ask USDA to clarify how the program will address fuel expenses incurred this fall to establish the 2027 winter wheat crop. Wheat farms may incur expenses in the same calendar year both to harvest one crop and to plant the next, including on different acres within a crop rotation. If USDA adopts a narrower fuel-based methodology, we request consideration of these fall planting expenses, consistent with program authorities and without duplicating assistance for the same costs.

Acreage eligibility and wheat-fallow rotations. Wheat-fallow rotations are essential to managing limited moisture and maintaining viable farming operations in many wheat-growing regions. Although fallow acres are not harvested, growers incur fuel and other operating expenses to maintain them. We ask USDA to clarify whether fallow acres will

qualify for assistance and, to the extent permitted under program authorities, recognize those costs through eligible acreage or the payment methodology. If fallow acres are excluded, USDA should explain how its methodology accounts for the costs associated with these rotations.

Crop-share arrangements. We request clear guidance on how eligibility and payments will be determined under crop-share agreements, including arrangements in which a landowner receives a share of the crop but does not perform farming operations. USDA should clarify how reported crop shares and responsibility for fuel and operating expenses will affect payment allocation. We encourage an approach that recognizes the costs borne by growers in crop-share arrangements.

Acreage reporting flexibility. We recognize the importance of using existing acreage reports to deliver assistance quickly. However, growers should have a reasonable opportunity to address reporting issues without automatically losing eligibility. We ask USDA to provide a limited process, consistent with its authority, to correct good-faith errors and consider documented reporting extensions, circumstances beyond a grower's control, and verifiable late-filed reports. Clear instructions to county offices would help ensure consistent treatment.

Payment timing and continuity. Growers need a reliable timeline to plan for near-term expenses and financing decisions. We request that USDA publish the anticipated application opening date, processing timeline, and expected start of payments alongside commodity-specific payment rates. We support prefilled applications, prompt county-office guidance, and accessible assistance for growers who need help applying. We also ask USDA to clarify how a potential lapse in federal appropriations could affect application processing and payments, and to take all legally available steps to maintain essential staffing and payment operations.

Coordination on dyed-diesel relief. We also appreciate the Administration's efforts to address fuel costs through temporary dyed-diesel relief. We request USDA's assistance in coordinating with Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service to provide clear transition guidance before that relief expires. Specifically, growers need to know how fuel remaining in vehicle tanks will be treated and whether any steps involving tanks, fuel lines, or filters will be necessary. We encourage a reasonable transition period, consistent with applicable law, that protects growers from penalties attributable to residual fuel lawfully used during the relief period and avoids unnecessary draining, disposal, or maintenance costs.

State coordination is equally important, particularly for growers transporting wheat across state lines. We ask USDA to work with the appropriate federal and state officials to encourage corresponding state relief and make state-specific requirements readily accessible. Guidance should clearly distinguish permission to use dyed diesel from any remaining tax, filing, or payment obligations.

NAWG stands ready to provide grower input and practical examples to assist USDA as these decisions are made. We would welcome a follow-up discussion before implementation guidance is finalized, along with a designated USDA point of contact for questions that arise during rollout.

Thank you again for your support of America's wheat growers and your attention to these implementation needs. We look forward to working with you to ensure this assistance reaches eligible growers promptly and effectively.

Sincerely,



Sam Kieffer
CEO