

November 15, 2002

Senator Trent Lott
Majority Leader
United States Senate

Dear Trent:

Hurricane Isadore and Lilli have devastated Mississippi's agriculture industry this year. Mississippi farmers will see crop losses exceed \$162 million in 2002 in cotton, soybeans, rice, and sweet potatoes alone. Real financial relief is necessary for Mississippi family farmers to continue farming production.

On October 29th, I sent a letter to Agriculture Secretary Veneman requesting financial relief for crop losses experienced by our state's farmers. Although the USDA has low-interest low programs for farmers devastated by natural disasters, these programs are simply not enough to truly help our farmers. I am seeking your support for a meaningful disaster assistance package that would:

- Provide direct compensation to farmers for losses greater than 30 percent;
- Increase low-interest crop disaster loans to \$750,000;
-