July 21, 2020

Dear Senator:

Nebraska Farm Bureau (NEFB) recognizes and appreciates the position in which you and other leaders find themselves. You are charged with balancing the priorities of the state; the highest of which are ensuring the health and well-being of all Nebraskans as we deal with this unprecedented pandemic.

Like other businesses and individuals, Nebraska’s farm and ranch families are facing major financial challenges. COVID-19 has delivered a major blow to agriculture. If the situation does not improve, Nebraska could face nearly $3.7 billion in COVID-19-related agricultural losses alone.

With this in mind, we are asking you to make meaningful property tax relief a priority in the remaining days of the 2020 session. Property tax relief would help many Nebraskans, including its farmers and ranchers who are struggling through one of the worst financial situations since the 1980’s farm crisis.

Agriculture is a very capital-intensive business, requiring most producers to borrow money each year to cover operating expenses and property taxes. Main street businesses and agricultural producers have received some federal assistance. While the financial assistance has been helpful, Nebraska agricultural producers pay some of the highest property taxes in the nation – more than producers in almost any other state and many times more than producers in surrounding states.

NEFB supports LB 1106. It would provide up to 10-12 percent additional property tax relief. To us, that is meaningful property tax relief.

While property tax relief is our top priority, we recognize there are other priorities you have to consider. However, property tax relief must come first or at a minimum, be included within a simultaneously negotiated legislative package where state funds for property tax relief are equitable to dollars allocated for other measures aimed at generating economic stimulus for our state.

As you examine ways to get Nebraska back on its feet, we remind you that one out of every four jobs in Nebraska is created by and depends on agriculture. Making a significant investment in the state’s number one industry, such as that made by LB 1106, would go a long way in restoring stability to Nebraska’s economy and ensuring the health and well-being of countless Nebraskans.

Thank you for your time and attention. Please feel free to reach out with questions or concerns. We welcome every opportunity to work with you as you put together a well-balanced approach to restoring stability to our state’s economy.

Sincerely,

Steve Nelson, President
Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation