

WASHINGTON – Congressman Spencer Bachus (AL-6) today joined with Alabama’s House delegation in requesting emergency aid for farmers and ranchers affected by the severe drought in the state.

A letter sent to U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Mike Johanns asks for the immediate release of "Section 32" funds to assist with the emergency transportation of hay so that cattlemen have feed for their livestock. Farmers and ranchers are facing higher costs bringing in hay from other states because the drought has reduced the amount of usable hay on farms in Alabama. Funds from the "Section 32" account can be used by the USDA to respond to a variety of emergency purposes. Payment distribution would be administered through the Farm Services Agency.

The congressional delegation also requested a meeting with Secretary Johanns to discuss further steps that USDA can take to help Alabama’s farmers during the worst drought that some parts of the state have experienced in more than a century.

The Department of Agriculture has designated all 67 counties in Alabama as disaster areas, making farmers eligible for low-cost loans and other assistance.

A copy of the letter is attached.