

WASHINGTON – Congressman Spencer Bachus (AL-6) today commended the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for making emergency aid available to Alabama farmers affected by the severe drought in the state.

All 67 counties in Alabama, including the seven counties in the 6th Congressional District, have been declared primary natural disaster areas due to drought.

"The drought conditions have caused a major hardship for farmers. Although Alabama is finally getting some rain, there are already agricultural losses and some farmers will need help to make it through this difficult season," Bachus said.

Farm operators will be eligible for low-interest emergency loans from USDA based on a review of their applications. Farmers can contact their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office for more information.

Bachus wrote to U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Michael Johanns on June 10 asking for his rapid review of a disaster declaration request submitted by Governor Bob Riley. The agriculture industry contributes \$5.15 billion to Alabama's economy through farm and forestry production.

One of the driest starts to a year in more than a century in Alabama has resulted in minimal rainfall, low stream flows, depleted reservoir levels, and decreased hydroelectric power production. Rainfall in some parts of the state is 20 inches below normal levels.