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November 23, 2020

The Honorable Emily W. Murphy
Administrator
U.S. General Services Administration
1800 F St., NW
Washington, DC 20405

Dear Administrator Murphy,

I am deeply alarmed by the General Services Administration's delay in providing President-elect Joe Biden and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris with resources for a timely and effective presidential transition. As you know, the General Services Administration is charged with providing resources to the transition under the law. I urge you to take immediate action to ascertain Vice President Biden as President-elect and Senator Harris as Vice President-elect and allow the transition to obtain the resources required under the law.

While a smooth and well-prepared transition is always vital, we are now suffering through a pandemic that is raging across America, making the need for a well-informed and planned transition even more critical. The delay in starting the transition has grave costs that could harm the farmers, families, and rural communities that rely on the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

For example, the lack of information flowing from the Administration to the transition team makes it much harder for the transition team to make plans to ensure that food assistance will be available to struggling families. Due to the COVID-19 declaration, most states are receiving emergency supplemental SNAP funds, but emergency plans for these states need to be extended regularly. The Continuing Resolution also authorized the extension of Pandemic EBT and expansion, for the first time, for children in child care. The transition team needs access to get information from the USDA in order to make appropriate plans to be able to seamlessly take over this process and make sure that food assistance will be made available to children, families, and seniors that need it.

Additionally, the pandemic has seriously affected farmers and ranchers and caused major disruptions across our food supply chain. The transition team needs access to information from USDA so it can develop plans to address these problems and help farmers weather this crisis. It is also critical that the transition receives access to USDA information so it can be prepared to maintain the stability of our food supply.

Finally, USDA needs strong and decisive leadership in the new Administration. It is time for the transition to begin so the President-elect can move forward in nominating qualified leaders to oversee the Department. Without the transition, the nominations cannot begin to move because required FBI background checks and ethics verifications cannot be carried out.

Your unprecedented refusal to recognize the President-elect is threatening to undermine the incoming Administration's ability to serve the American people during this ongoing crisis. It is critical that you recognize the will of the American people and facilitate a seamless transition.

I urge you to take immediate action to ascertain Vice President Biden as President-elect and Senator Harris as Vice President-elect and allow the transition to obtain the resources required under the law.

Thanks for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debbie Stabenow". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line underneath it.

Debbie Stabenow
Ranking Member