March 10, 2017

The Honorable Mike Young
Acting Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
14th Street and Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Young:

Livestock producers in our states are experiencing grazing land shortages due to ongoing wildfires. Combined, more than 1.5 million acres have burned in the past week. While damage assessments and economic losses are still being calculated, daily operations have ceased as farmers and ranchers work to remove livestock from harm's way and find new grazing pastures.

The states of Texas, Kansas, New Mexico and Oklahoma are requesting the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency to expedite the temporary suspension of grazing restrictions in the Conservation Reserve Program in our states pursuant to Title 7, Section 1410.63 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Emergency grazing authorization would provide immediate relief to livestock producers in areas affected by the ongoing wildfires.

These fires have also devastated critical infrastructure, including fencing, on farms and ranches in our states. The Emergency Conservation Program provides critical financial resources to affected farmers and ranchers to rebuild fences. We urge the Farm Service Agency to expedite the implementation of the Emergency Conservation Program in our states pursuant to Title 7, Part 701 of the Code of Federal Regulations. The sooner the program is implemented, the faster the livestock industries in our states can begin to rebuild from this devastating event.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Greg Abbott
Governor of Texas

Sam Brownback
Governor of Kansas

Susana Martinez
Governor of New Mexico

Mary Fallin
Governor of Oklahoma

cc: Mr. Chris Beyerhelm, Acting FSA Administrator