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\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\*

## **BAUCUS AND TESTER: MORE EMERGENCY RESOURCES ON THE WAY FOR MONTANA FARMERS AND RANCHERS HIT BY WILDFIRE, DROUGHT**

***Senators Continue to Press USDA for Disaster Assistance for Montana's Agriculture Industry***

(Washington, D.C.) – Montana's U.S. Senators Max Baucus and Jon Tester announced today Montana farmers and ranchers in seven additional counties will now have access to emergency assistance to help rebuild fences and rehabilitate rangeland torched by wildfires. In addition, Baucus and Tester secured today emergency water for irrigation and livestock in five Montana counties hit hardest by drought.

**"This is a full court press to get our farmers and ranchers through a tough time. One in five Montana jobs relies on our agriculture industry so it's absolutely critical to keep pressing for the tools necessary to get through this wildfire season and the ongoing drought,"** said Baucus.

**"Farmers, ranchers and small business owners across Montana are dealing with historic drought and wildfires,"** Tester said. **"These additional resources will help them get back on their feet and strengthen our economy by strengthening their livelihood."**

Baucus and Tester have been pressing the Agriculture Department to [speed up all available federal resources for Montana agriculture producers](#) struggling with wildfire and drought disaster conditions. Today's news means the following counties qualify for the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) Wildfire program which allows farmers and ranchers access to resources to help restore fences, water and conservation structures:

- Rosebud
- Powder River
- Treasure
- Cascade
- Custer
- Jefferson
- Big Horn

In addition, Stillwater, Carbon, Yellowstone, Big Horn and Sweet Grass counties now qualify for ECP drought emergency measures to help farmers and ranchers with water conservation, emergency grazing, emergency water for irrigation systems and emergency water for livestock operations.

Baucus and Tester are continuing to urge the USDA to approve natural disaster designations which would allow producers to qualify for the following counties/reservation:

Stillwater, Carter, Yellowstone, Powder River, Custer, Treasure, Fallon, Rosebud, Sweet Grass, Beaverhead, Wheatland, Carbon, Teton, Judith Basis, Glacier, Golden Valley, Madison and Richland counties & Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation.

Approval of a disaster declaration is necessary for producers to access a wide array of agriculture disaster programs. Baucus and Tester have [sponsored legislation](#) to extend agriculture disaster programs that expired at the end of the 2011 Fiscal Year such as the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) program, which provided assistance for farmers affected by disasters.

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