



**National
Barley
Growers
Association**

Have a safe and
relaxing holiday!

WELCOME TO

National Barley Growers Association



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Appropriations & COVID Relief Package Includes Assistance for Barley Farmers, Beer Tax Provisions, & Barley Research Priorities

Congress reached an agreement on a large package that will include all of the fiscal year 2021 regular appropriations bills, a \$900 billion COVID response package, and extension of expiring tax provisions (aka tax extenders), including making permanent the reduced beer excise tax provisions from the Craft Beverage Modernization Tax Reform Act. The measure passed the House and Senate before midnight on December 21st.

The appropriations section included full funding for Wheat & Barley Scab Initiative, funding for Barley Pest Initiative, and Small Grains Genomic Initiative.

The COVID response portion of the package includes \$26 billion for food and agriculture. Of that, \$13 billion is for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. The other half will go to USDA, with \$11.1 billion for direct assistance to farmers and producers. For barley farmers, the bill provides payments to producers of \$20 per acre for crops and commodities such as barley that were included in the Price Trigger and Flate-Rate categories of the USDA CFAP2 program.

Biden Names Vilsack as Nominee for Secretary of Agriculture

President-elect Joe Biden has selected Tom Vilsack as his nominee to be Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In a statement, the Biden-Harris transition said, “Secretary Tom Vilsack, a two-term governor of Iowa and the secretary of Agriculture for all eight years of the Obama-Biden administration, is ready to get to work on Day One.”

“Vilsack is committed to ensuring the USDA promotes true equity and inclusion in every mission it has. Confirmed by the unanimous consent of the Senate in 2009, Secretary Vilsack oversaw record-breaking investments in rural communities, secured vital improvements to the nation’s school meal system, and led a successful campaign to increase food safety standards.”

Michael Regan to be Nominee for EPA Administrator

President-elect Joe Biden will nominate Michael Regan to be administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Regan started his career at EPA, left in 2008 for the Environmental Defense Fund and in 2016 was appointed Director of North Carolina's Department of Environmental Quality.

2020 Brought Challenges and Successes for Barley Policy

Like everyone, barley growers have experienced a number of challenges in 2020 with market and supply chain disruptions due to the COVID pandemic. Amidst all of those challenges there are some positives. Earlier this year, USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) finally approved changes to the Malt Barley Endorsement to include Local Market Prices, beginning with the 2021 crop year. The National Barley Growers Association (NBGA) has worked with growers, states, and RMA to accomplish this change.

Barley priorities supported by NBGA for federal funding are also fared well with full funding provided in the FY21 Appropriations bill for the Wheat & Barley Scab Initiative, continued funding for the Small Grains Genomic Initiative, and first-time funding for the Barley Pest Initiative. The NBGA also actively engaged in efforts with our industry partners that resulted in permanent extension of the federal beer excise tax reforms that were originally enacted in the Craft Beverage Tax Modernization Act. Preventing an increase in the federal beer excise tax rates is especially vital as the industry copes with the dramatic COVID impacts on bars, restaurants and sporting events – the largest markets for the industry.

Hopefully, 2021 will present fewer challenges.

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