

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 19, 2025

Dear Secretary Rollins:

Congratulations on your recent confirmation as Secretary of the Department of Agriculture. I write to wish you well in your first weeks in this important role and to urge you to take immediate action to strengthen our food supply chain and use every tool at your disposal to lower the surging costs of staple groceries like eggs.

As Secretary, you now oversee programs that provide support to farmers, ranchers, and rural communities across the United States, including in Nevada. Your department also plays an integral role in protecting our food production and distribution supply chains, which have direct impacts on consumer costs. It is no secret that the bird flu is having a devastating effect on producers and ranchers, and on the communities they serve. Just last week, Nevada had the first case of a new variant of bird flu in cattle. This is not only disrupting the livelihoods of the producers who are running the impacted operations, but is also harming Nevada consumers, who are feeling the effects at the grocery store.

Astronomical prices, coupled with a severe egg supply shortage, are hurting hardworking families in my state. My constituents have continued to reach out, concerned that they cannot access this staple item and if they can, it is too expensive for their family to afford. On top of this, overall inflation increased by 3 percent last month. This is further compounding the high egg prices we are seeing because of supply chain deficiencies. With egg prices expected to climb by another 20 percent this year, it is imperative for USDA to take immediate actions to mitigate this sharp projected increase.

President Trump campaigned on lowering costs for Nevada families. Families cannot afford to be collateral damage for this Administration's inability to focus on the issues that actually impact quality of life for our constituents. The lack of action thus far to address high grocery prices in Nevada is unacceptable. As Secretary, you must do everything in your power to, first and foremost, mitigate and eliminate the bird flu that is at the root of high egg prices. This includes supporting the workforce that is on the frontlines fighting the bird flu and preventing its spread. Decisions to lay off hundreds of USDA employees, including those that are coordinating efforts to address the bird flu around the country, will only serve to make the situation worse. You must reverse course if this is indeed the case.

In addition to taking immediate steps to combat the spread of bird flu, I urge you to work with your partners at other federal agencies to address the high costs of eggs and remedy the broader supply chain challenges we are experiencing. This includes working with the Federal Trade Commission to ensure bad actors are not taking advantage of the current dire situation and partaking in price gouging practices that hurt Nevadans. It also includes working with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to ensure that communities, particularly those near operations that have been impacted, have reliable and consistent access to resources to stay safe and healthy.

Nevada families are facing rising costs across the board and should not be struggling to afford staple grocery items like eggs. We must mitigate the effects of the current bird flu crisis at hand, do everything we can to lower prices in the meantime – which includes making sure bad actors are not profiting off the backs of hardworking Nevadans – and enact long term solutions that can prevent already high prices from going even higher. I respectfully request that you reply to this letter by March 5th with a list of actions USDA is currently taking and the actions that you plan to take in the coming months to lower grocery costs for families, support producers, protect workers, and fortify and ensure the safety of our domestic food supply chain.

Sincerely,



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator