

Washington, D.C. – Friday, Rep. David Price (NC-04) introduced legislation aimed at providing emergency relief to poultry farmers who lost out on production contracts because of corporate bankruptcies and the closure of numerous processing plants across the nation. The legislation would affect farmers across the Southeast, including growers in Chatham, Alamance, Harnett, and Orange Counties.

Poultry farmers who contract with large poultry processors often incur significant debt to build and update their chicken houses and farms with the understanding that they will be reimbursed at a pre-determined rate upon delivery of their flock to the processors. But, poultry processors are not restricted from terminating contracts with the growers who incur such substantial start-up expenses. A string of poultry processing company bankruptcies and the resulting contract terminations have left farm families in danger of losing their farms, livelihoods, and homes.

"These farmers' contracts were pulled through no fault of their own," Rep. Price said. "This legislation will help growers land on their feet, allowing them time to find new contracts, or restructure their farms."

Poultry growers are not currently eligible for disaster assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Price's legislation directs the USDA to provide funding to the growers through a temporary financial assistance program. A similar bill was introduced by North Carolina Representative Bob Etheridge in the 111th Congress, which resulted in the implementation of a USDA lost poultry contract relief assistance program in 2009.

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