



# Rep. Tom Emmer on Congressman Emmer speaks to Mark Dorenkamp on Brownfield Ag Radio Network live at Farmfest

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**\*\*HOST:**

\*\* I'm Tom Emmer. I represent Minnesota's 6th Congressional District and the U.S. House of Representatives. Congressman Emmer, you just wrapped up participating in an Ag Policy Forum here at Farmfest. A lot of issues were discussed. Which of them were in our top of mind for you as far as agriculture policy?

**\*\*REP. TOM EMMER:**

\*\* Well, the list can go on and on. I've been heavily involved in mental health issues, in production issues, processing issues. But I'll tell you the two big ones that we got out of today's conference, which was not surprising. Great panel, great audience. It was both the potential tax policy changes that can take place before the end of the year or by the end of the year. And labor issues. Those seem to be top of everyone's mind. And frankly, it's something that we've been hearing not only in our own communities, but all across the state and all across the country.

**\*\*HOST:**

\*\* We've been hearing about proposed changes to step-it-up basis and capital gains. But in Washington, where are these talks currently at? How far along are they?

**\*\*REP. TOM EMMER:**

\*\* Well, if you take a look, with the new administration, they're six months in. So far, really all you've seen is this major 2700-page bill that just came out. I should go back. I mean, there was the American Recovery Act that they passed. But that was a reconciliation bill that was passed by just Democrat votes. A lot of us complained about it at the time because it was supposed to be about COVID recovery and relief. And in fact, I think about 9 percent of that bill actually dealt with COVID. And instead, it sent money to states and communities that were running surpluses, right, that are now trying to figure out where that money goes. Since then, there's been a lot of talk trying to bring people together on a major infrastructure bill. Anyway, it looked like it was going to move in the spring. Then it looked like it had failed. Then 10 senators brought it back to life. And last week, they finally put out a 2700-page proposal that they're currently trying to walk through the Senate, as we speak today, with the amendment process. And I warn everyone today, you've got an issue because there were only 10 people that worked on that 2700 pages. None of those people, by the way, were on any committee of jurisdiction having to do with the infrastructure issues we're talking about. Is that a problem? No. But what it means is everyone else now, as it's come to the Senate floor, is going to have a chance to weigh in through the amendment process on how they think the current language should be adjusted or things that have been left out or perhaps included that they don't think should be. That debate will be going on for the next week. I don't think they're going to finish it this week. Assuming they don't, we're going to be looking at coming back to the



House after Labor Day. And then you've got the short sprint to the end of the fiscal year on September 3rd. It's anybody's guess. You've got a debt ceiling that has to get done. You've got to figure out what vehicle that's going to be on. If it is the infrastructure bill, if it survives this amendment process, I don't know, I might be a little bullish on our hope for some really good things to happen through the end of the year. If not, then it's going to be that one-sided process and the Democrats will do reconciliation. That will be the issue. Do we do a continued resolution before the end of the fiscal year on September 30th to say a date out right after Thanksgiving, early December? And then we're going to have a lot of debate going into the end of the year.

**\*\*HOST:**

\*\* Help me to understand with the proposed tax changes, is that in the 2700 pages as far as how they're going to pay for some of these infrastructure proposals or am I off the mark?

**\*\*REP. TOM EMMER:**

\*\* No, and I appreciate your patience letting me go through that whole timeline. Because no, tax increases, there are some obviously because you'll see the headlines where they're talking about Democrats and bipartisan Republican senators scrambling to find pay-fors, right, to pay for some of these things that they want to do in the infrastructure bill. But when we talk about stepped-up basis, when we talk about an increase to the capital gains tax, perhaps up to almost 40%, when we talk about changing our estate tax laws by really restricting what an estate can pass to the next generation, those are likely to be seen in a reconciliation bill that I believe will come to the floor sometime before the end of the year. And that's when we all have to be weighing in now. You heard this great panel this morning say be engaged, let your voices be heard collectively, not just one at a time, right? Because as we get to the end of the year, these people have to understand, these people that are going to be voting on this stuff, they have to understand the future of the generational farm, the future of our agricultural way of life literally hangs in the balance if you start to eliminate things like stepped-up basis.

**\*\*HOST:**

\*\* President Biden has talked about protections for farms and small businesses against these changes. Have there been enough details yet for you to have an opinion on whether those protections will be enough?

**\*\*REP. TOM EMMER:**

\*\* Yeah, no, there are no details yet. They realize this is a problem, which is why I'm surprised we're still talking about it. The president or someone on his behalf did come out and talk about quote-unquote carve-outs. Okay, what does that mean? And I mean, if you're out there in the community right now, you don't know if you would be one of those that will be carved out. Look, when it comes to the end, this is not good policy, because if it was good policy, we wouldn't be talking about carve-outs. We would be talking about policy that makes sense for all of us, whether it's the ag community, the community, or it's mom-and-pop businesses on main streets in your communities and all across this country. That stepped-up basis is going to have, and the increased capital gains rate. I mean, go back and look at President Kennedy back in the early 60s. This was an issue that he figured out, right? We've got to start to come together on some of these policies to understand it's not about being a Republican or a Democrat. It's about doing the right thing to make sure that our ag communities, our ag industry, our farm families not just survive, but they start thriving.

**\*\*HOST:**

\*\* On immigration, give our listeners an idea of how big the problems are at the farm level, whether it's on a pork or dairy farm, or we're talking about meat processing, how bad it is currently, and whether there are potential solutions that have been proposed in Congress, or if you feel like the right path has not been



presented yet, and give us your thoughts on what that right path is.

**\*\*REP. TOM EMMER:**

\*\* Well, first off, I never pretend to tell our ag community what the problems are that they're experiencing. They tell us, and I mean, I can tell you, the problem at the border is a real problem. We've had a question at the forum this morning about the labor issues, and the person that brought it up said, and you know, everybody seems to want to focus on the border all the time, but we've got to talk about our labor issues. Well, I'll tell you what, border and labor are related. You have to have a coherent immigration policy, and quite frankly, we don't have one. Whether you like what the last administration was doing, or for that matter, the administration before that, we are still stuck in this place where we aren't solving the problem. You've got to have clear rules, you've got to enforce those rules, and you've got to have people that are there to enforce the rules. That'll help us when it comes to visas and everything else, but we literally rely on our ag community to tell us where the shortages are, what they need, and right now, when you've got nine million jobs open across this country, there's a serious issue that Republicans and Democrats better get on with very soon. We've got to get America back to work, right? And our farm community is a great place to start.

**\*\*HOST:**

\*\* Last issue I wanted to get your thoughts on, the drought, which everybody's talking about here at FarmTest this week. From a congressional level, how do you feel about the support mechanisms that are in place, and are you looking for more to be done?

**\*\*REP. TOM EMMER:**

\*\* Actually, we're always looking for help when it's things that are out of people's control. The drought, obviously, is something nobody can predict when it's going to hit you or how it's going to hit you. I've been working with a beef farmer up in northern Minnesota who was told if he could access CRP land, there was a program, a disaster program, that he could actually use that to raise his cattle. And then was told that he had to come up with thousands of dollars in order to leverage this disaster. Look, right now, our job, when people have an issue like this, is to help them get through it, because he needs access to the program that he was told. And then if people have ideas of where there's a shortage or something else that might be helpful, please, let us know, because we're always happy to try and help. Make sure that the people who take care of us, who put the food on our table, feed the state, the country, and the world, that they have what they need to continue to do that.

**\*\*HOST:**

\*\* Anything else that you want to make sure we talk about today?

**\*\*REP. TOM EMMER:**

\*\* All I'd say to you is nobody was bringing up the pandemic. All your listeners, I'm glad we have made it through the pandemic. It is time to start focusing on the future. It's going to get better. And those of you that say to me on a regular basis, well, it can't get any worse. Yeah, okay, that's great. But just focus on it's going to get better. We're going to make sure it gets better.

**\*\*HOST:**

\*\* I appreciate your time. Thank you.

**\*\*REP. TOM EMMER:**



\*\* Thank you.

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