

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 11, 2021

The Honorable Robert E. Lighthizer
United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20508

Dear Ambassador Lighthizer:

We write to underscore the importance of cross-border trade to the U.S. economy as the Section 201 global safeguard investigation on imported blueberries continues, as do the Section 332 investigations of imported strawberries, bell peppers, squash, and cucumbers, which could trigger expedited 201 cases. We respectfully urge you to consider the interests of American consumers, workers, and agricultural exporters when making any determinations.

We recognize the need to verify that trade relationships are beneficial to American companies and consumers. We also note that international trade is critical to our food supply and enables the agricultural industry to meet consumer demand. The market disruptions felt at the onset of the COVID-19 crisis highlighted the fragility of our supply chain. Working with our international partners strengthens those supply chains and ensures a reliable food supply for Americans across the country. Additionally, some fresh fruits and vegetables are simply not domestically available in sufficient volume during certain months. For example, Mexico, Peru, Argentina, and Chile supply blueberries in the off season, ensuring that American families have access to fresh berries even during the winter months, while allowing U.S. growers to respond to increased demand for other produce during that time of year. Filling in gaps of our robust domestic industry is important to ensure consumers have access to produce throughout the year.

As you know, the agricultural industry is a driver of the American economy. U.S. agricultural exports have grown steadily over the past quarter century to reach \$136.7 billion in 2019, up from \$46.1 billion in 1994. Exports to Canada and Mexico have nearly quadrupled in value over the same time period as a result of the elimination of agricultural trade barriers in the North American Free Trade Agreement and the subsequent United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement. Imposing trade restrictions on blueberries and other fresh produce could invite retaliation from important trading partners and stall our export industry.

As the investigations continue, we ask you to recognize the importance of cross-border trade and consumer preference and urge you to not take any actions that would harm the significant economic benefit of the agricultural industry on the U.S. economy.

Sincerely,

Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator

Jerry Moran
United States Senator

David Schweikert
Member of Congress

Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress

Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

Mark Kelly
United States Senator

Roger Marshall, M.D.
United States Senator

Greg Stanton
Member of Congress

Julia Brownley
Member of Congress

Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress

Andy Biggs
Member of Congress

Debbie Lesko
Member of Congress

Chris Stewart
Member of Congress

Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress

Don Bacon
Member of Congress

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Ted Lieu
Member of Congress

Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Jason Kearns, Chair of the U.S. International Trade Commission; The Honorable Randolph Stayin, Vice Chair of the U.S. International Trade Commission; David Johanson, Commissioner, U.S. International Trade Commission; The Honorable Rhonda Schmidlein, Commissioner, U.S. International Trade Commission; The Honorable Amy Karpel, Commissioner, U.S. Trade Commissioner