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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION AND FORESTRY

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April 22, 2016

The Honorable Michael Froman
United States Trade Representative
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Ambassador Froman:

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP) presents the United States with the opportunity to break down barriers and grow exports for agriculture in one of our most significant trading markets. The European Union (EU) is the world's top importer of food and agriculture products, yet the U.S. market share is increasingly deteriorating due to tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade. In 2015, the U.S. had a \$16 billion surplus in agricultural trade globally, yet in the EU, U.S. agricultural exports saw a record \$12 billion trade deficit.

A final agreement that does not include a strong framework for agriculture could have a negative impact on Congressional support for this deal. It is imperative that tariff elimination on all products – including beef, pork, poultry, rice, and fruits and vegetables – remain a priority. The EU must be willing to work towards liberalization in all sectors of agriculture. A premature conclusion of the T-TIP negotiations threatens to undermine the negotiating position of the U.S. in resolving long-standing regulatory barriers such as hormone use in U.S. beef, maximum residue limits in fruits and vegetables, and dairy certification requirements.

In 2014, two bipartisan letters from U.S. Senators urged you to fight against geographical indication (GI) restrictions promoted by the EU. The EU has continued to use Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with trading partners to impose barriers on U.S. exports under the pretense of protecting GIs. This practice is undermining established FTAs as well as those being actively negotiated. To date, there has not been assurance the T-TIP negotiations are addressing these concerns.

Finally, EU members continue to miss key deadlines for import approvals of biotechnology products. Approvals of some products have been delayed even after positive evaluations by the European Food Safety Agency, and currently there are at least three products that have been awaiting import approval since 2011 and 2012. The inability to implement existing regulations and provide certainty based on sound science related to agriculture policies raises questions about the success of new obligations and commitments established in the T-TIP.

If the T-TIP is to achieve the robust support of the agriculture industry, including America's hard working farmers and ranchers, agricultural trade issues must be addressed before negotiations conclude. We strongly urge you to continue to fight for a T-TIP agreement that prioritizes U.S. agriculture, including the removal of non-science based regulatory barriers and the reduction and removal of tariffs on agricultural products.

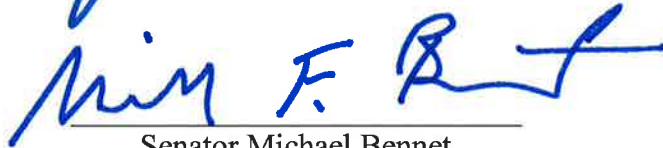
Sincerely,




Senator Pat Roberts



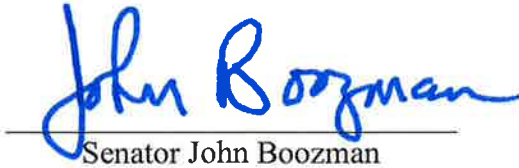
Senator Debbie Stabenow



Senator Michael Bennet



Senator Roy Blunt



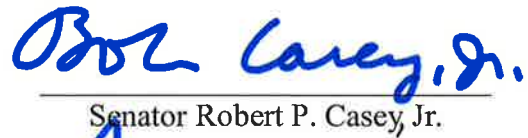
Senator John Boozman



Senator Sherrod Brown



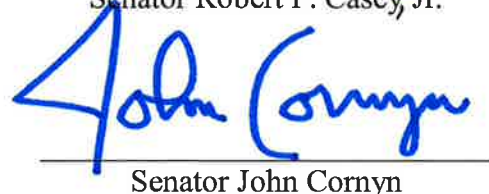
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Senator Robert P. Casey, Jr.



Senator Thad Cochran



Senator John Cornyn



Senator Joe Donnelly



Senator Michael Enzi



Senator Joni Ernst



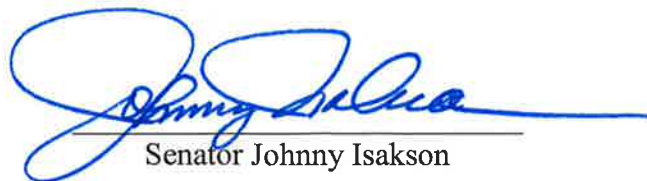
Senator Chuck Grassley



Senator Heidi Heitkamp



Senator John Hoeven



Senator Johnny Isakson



Senator Amy Klobuchar



Senator Claire McCaskill



Senator Mitch McConnell



Senator David Perdue



Senator Rob Portman



Senator Ben Sasse



Senator John Thune



Senator Thom Tillis



Senator Mark Warner