

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 20, 2017

The Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary of Commerce
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Ross,

As Senators representing states with significant agricultural economies, we write to you today to underscore the vital role that agriculture plays throughout our home states and across America. Given your recent comments regarding agriculture and international trade, we find it essential that Congress' voice be heard.

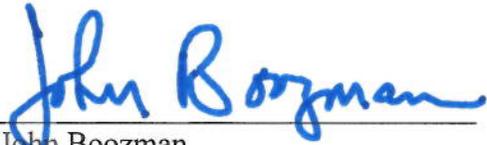
The U.S. is the world's top exporter of food and agricultural products and is an important economic driver that stimulates prosperity and jobs throughout rural America. According to USDA, every \$1 in agricultural exports generates an additional \$1.27 in economic activity, and every \$1 billion in farm exports supports 8,000 jobs. In fact, the data shows the benefits of agricultural trade align with many of the Administration's goals and priorities – supports U.S. jobs, encourages U.S. investment, and fosters economic growth within the U.S.

The agriculture industry does not want to see momentum hindered especially at a time when net farm income has declined by approximately 50 percent over the past four years. It is imperative that before any changes are made to NAFTA, or any other free trade agreement, that economic analysis that illustrates the impact on the full supply chain of the industries involved be shared. As such, we request an economic analysis that examines and evaluates the impacts to crop and livestock sectors as a result of any change to NAFTA.

With 95 percent of consumers residing outside of the U.S., farmers and ranchers must have access to export markets to sell their high-quality product. Free trade agreements have allowed the U.S. agriculture industry to establish itself as a trusted supplier. International markets have taken years to build, and it is imperative that no steps be taken to jeopardize these gains. We must continue to move the global presence of U.S. agricultural products forward, not backward.

As the Administration works to strengthen current trade agreements and negotiate new agreements, we ask that you support the important role that agriculture plays in the nation's economy. We look forward to working with you to ensure a strong marketplace for our farmers and ranchers.

Sincerely,



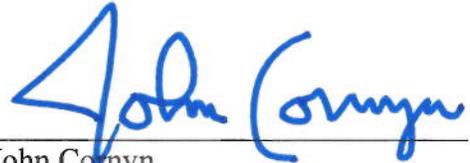
John Boozman
U.S. Senator



Heidi Heitkamp
U.S. Senator



M. Michael Rounds
U.S. Senator



John Cornyn
U.S. Senator



Johnny Isakson
U.S. Senator



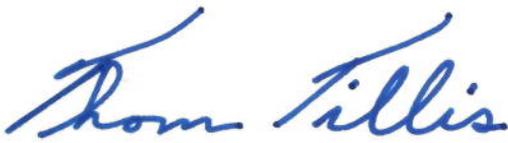
John Hoeven
U.S. Senator



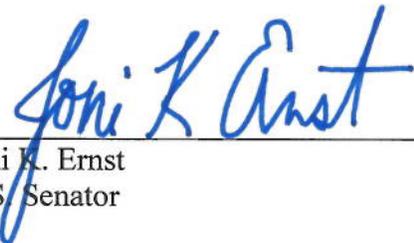
Pat Roberts
U.S. Senator



Jerry Moran
U.S. Senator

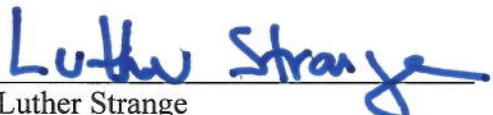


Thom Tillis
U.S. Senator



Joni K. Ernst
U.S. Senator


Steve Daines
U.S. Senator


Luther Strange
U.S. Senator


Roy Blunt
U.S. Senator


Claire McCaskill
U.S. Senator


Rob Portman
U.S. Senator


Jeff Flake
U.S. Senator


John Thune
U.S. Senator


Charles E. Grassley
U.S. Senator

CC: The Honorable Robert Lighthizer, U.S. Trade Representative
The Honorable Sonny Perdue, Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture