

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 19, 2012

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairman
Senate Agriculture Committee
328 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Pat Roberts
Ranking Member
Senate Agriculture Committee
328 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Stabenow and Ranking Member Roberts:

We write today in support of the continued inclusion of important market development tools in the farm bill you are developing. The Market Access Program (MAP), Foreign Market Development Program (FMDP), the Emerging Markets Program (EMP), and the Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops Program (TSAC) are critical to expanding markets and opening new markets to agricultural products grown in the United States. These programs help to close the trade deficit that exists for specialty crops and expand market opportunities for all crops grown in the United States which is why they need to be maintained at current levels

MAP and FMDP work hand in hand to help our producers sell more of their products overseas. FMDP helps identify and establish new markets by supporting staff in foreign countries and providing important market information producers need to enter a new market. MAP helps expand and maintain existing markets by providing assistance to promote crops and react to challenges rapidly.

Since the Market Access Program was expanded as a result of increases included in previous farm bills, United States agricultural exports have increased by \$44.8 billion. This program is used by ranchers, farmers and fishermen to promote their products overseas and is critical to the continued economic recovery of the United States.

The Washington Apple Commission has used MAP funds to conduct market building activities in India to create strong brand awareness among consumers and trade members. As a result demand has increased from a few thousand cartons to a record 3.3 million cartons during the last season, valued at over \$61 million.

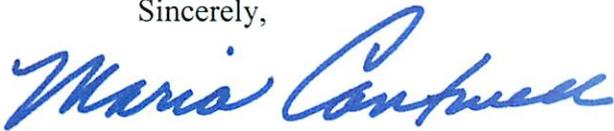
The Foreign Market Development Program and the Market Access Program combined have increased agricultural exports by 35 dollars for every dollar invested in the program from 2002 to 2009. In the Pacific Northwest, export promotion funding for cherries has produced a 41 to 1 return on every dollar spent which has generated \$257 million in cherry exports amounting to an economic impact of \$487 million dollars in 2011.

The Emerging Markets Program (EMP) which provides a modest amount of funding to help overcome technical issues in emerging markets is important to producers in Washington and has helped with market research on apples and cherry handling techniques in Southeast Asia.

The Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops Program (TSAC) provides modest assistance to organizations to address sanitary and phytosanitary barriers to agricultural exports.. As you may know, over the past five years, the United States Apple Export Council has exported \$6.5 million worth of apples to Mexico, which are directly attributable to the TASC program. Without this support, our growers would not have been able to complete the required inspections and preclearance programs necessary to export apples to Mexico.

These USDA export promotion programs have helped Washington state and American farmers and producers sell more of their products overseas. Each of these important export promotion programs fill an important role in expanding markets for American grown and produced commodities. These programs are also important to countering subsidized foreign competition by educating foreign consumers about the advantages of our high quality agricultural products. We strongly support your inclusion of these important market development tools at current levels in the next farm bill.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator