United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 3, 2009

Barack Obama
The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are concerned with recent actions taken by Mexico to impose more than $2 billion in tariffs on more than 80 U.S. exports to Mexico. We encourage you to include the resolution of this issue in your discussions with Mexican President Felipe Calderon this month and urge you to work toward a swift solution that results in the removal of these prohibitive tariffs. Ideally, the separate issue of international truck allowances and safety issues should also be addressed so it will no longer be used as an excuse for imposing prohibitive tariffs.

Accounting for more than $13 billion in U.S. agriculture exports, Mexico is a critical and growing market for U.S. farmers and ranchers. Mexico's close proximity and other factors have resulted in Mexico being one of the principal export markets for a number of U.S. agricultural products including: beef, corn, cotton, dairy, dry beans, eggs, pears, pork, potatoes, poultry, rice, and soybeans. Unfortunately, this market is being put in jeopardy by the prohibitive tariffs imposed by Mexico, and time is of the essence in resolving this issue.

It is estimated that, if the tariffs remain in place, U.S. potato producers would lose more than $17.7 million in sales for the remainder of 2009, increasing to a staggering $40 million loss in 2010. If the tariffs are in place through the summer, Pacific Northwest pear, apricot, and cherry growers are estimated to lose more than $6 million in sales as a result of a 30 percent drop in pear sales and a 50 percent decline in cherry and apricot sales. Prolonged imposition of these tariffs could also result in lost market share that would be difficult to regain. These losses would come at a time when our economy cannot afford another setback.

Maintaining access to essential export markets, such as Mexico, is imperative for U.S. farm families facing substantial challenges with high input costs, volatile prices, and tightening credit during the current economic challenges. Exports also contribute substantially to our nation's economy and support U.S. jobs. For these reasons, it is crucial that prompt action must be taken to eliminate the tariffs. We appreciate your efforts to address this issue and encourage continued dedication toward the timely elimination of these tariffs.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Mike Crapo
United States Senator

Ron Wyden
United States Senator

John Barrassso
United States Senator

Patty Murray
United States Senator

James E. Risch
United States Senator

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator