

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705

December 7, 2010

Tom Vilsack  
Secretary of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave. S.W.  
Washington D.C. 20250-0001

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

As you travel to Mexico on December 8<sup>th</sup> to meet with Mexico's Secretary of Agriculture Javier Mayorga Castaneda, I urge you to prioritize access for fresh American potatoes to all of Mexico. I traveled to Mexico in 2003 to urge an agreement on access to fresh American potatoes in Mexico. Shortly after, an agreement was reached to allow the shipment of fresh potatoes within 26 km of our border with Mexico. It was my understanding at the time that Mexico would work to open the rest of the country to imports by 2005.

Now, five years later, we are still waiting for full access to Mexico for our fresh potatoes. The restricted access we currently have generates sales of \$24 million. That market could grow to \$100 million if we were able to gain full access to the Mexico for fresh potatoes.

There is no phytosanitary reason for the border region restriction; the potatoes being exported to Mexico are destined for kitchens, not for farms. Nor are they being exported for seed; they are sprout inhibited rendering them ineffective for seed.

Mexico represents a very important market for the farmers of my home state of Washington. During these tough economic times, it is especially important to work to expand the number of markets available for American agricultural products.

Again, I urge you to make expanded fresh potato access to all of Mexico a priority during your upcoming meetings with your counterpart, Secretary Javier Mayorga Castaneda.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator

CC: Edward M. Avalos, Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs

**EVERETT**  
2930 WETMORE AVENUE  
SUITE 9B  
EVERETT, WA 98201  
(425) 303-0114  
FAX: (425) 303-8351

**RICHLAND**  
825 JADWIN AVENUE  
SUITE 204/204A  
RICHLAND, WA 99352  
(509) 946-8106  
FAX: (509) 946-6937

**SEATTLE**  
JACKSON FEDERAL BUILDING  
915 2ND AVENUE, SUITE 3206  
SEATTLE, WA 98174-1003  
(206) 220-6400  
TOLL FREE: 1-888-648-7328  
FAX: (206) 220-6404

**SPOKANE**  
U.S. FEDERAL COURTHOUSE  
WEST 920 RIVERSIDE, SUITE 697  
SPOKANE, WA 99201  
(509) 353-2507  
FAX: (509) 353-2547

**TACOMA**  
950 PACIFIC AVENUE  
SUITE 615  
TACOMA, WA 98402  
(253) 572-2281  
FAX: (253) 572-5879

**VANCOUVER**  
MARSHALL HOUSE  
1313 OFFICERS' ROW  
FIRST FLOOR  
VANCOUVER, WA 98661  
(360) 696-7838  
FAX: (360) 696-7844

**WASHINGTON, DC**  
511 DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705  
(202) 224-3441  
FAX: (202) 228-0514