

U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell

Floor Speech on Indian Prime Minister Modi's Visit and Trade Relations with India

June 22nd, 2023

[\[AUDIO\]](#) [\[VIDEO\]](#)

Cantwell: Mr. President, today is a very good day for one of Washington's most famous products. That is Washington apples.

And that is because retaliatory tariffs that have been put on Washington apples in India really impacted our growers across Washington state.

I want to thank Ambassador Tai and I want to thank the Biden administration, Secretary Raimondo especially. I also want to thank Ambassador Garcetti for making sure that in the negotiations leading up to today's visit by Prime Minister Modi, and discussions between the United States and India, that removing these retaliatory tariffs on apples was included on the list.

So today, our growers know that they can go back to marketing a great worldwide product, our Washington apples that had access to what at one point was a \$120 million market. This retaliatory tariff being removed will help boost sales to India.

It will help the bottom line of farmers in Washington state and it will be essential for the 1,400 growers that I have just recently visited along with my colleague Senator Stabenow in discussion of this year's Farm Bill, to say these are important markets for Washington products.

We heard from people like Jorge Sanchez, from Northern Fruit in East Wenatchee that quote, "India was a critical market for Washington apples and the tariffs had hit producers of Red Delicious especially hard."

These growers are looking forward to an opportunity to rebuild this market access. This deal also includes removing some of the tariffs on chickpeas and lentils, also a great Washington product that suffered under these retaliatory tariffs. India was a top export market for us chickpeas and lentils prior to the tariffs. And these important pulse crops are a very great product to see into the Indian market.

At its peak, the pulse crop value was over \$180 million, with the retaliatory tariffs over the last six years has dwindled down to next to nothing. That is why it was so important to speak directly to Prime Minister Modi to ask him to consider more trade with the United States to open up these opportunities for us. Washington, and India to work together and for the United States and India to work together.

Trade and investments are an essential part of our relationship with India. They are essential for all our allies and partners. And they should be in tandem with growing our partnership on critical leading-edge technologies.

I know the discussions that we'll be having today at the White House and in the future will be about marrying our technology economies as well. Very important work to be done in the post CHIPS and Science legislation that was passed and working together on important national security issues.

But today is also very good news because it shows that the partnership between the United States and India can get us off of these retaliatory tariffs, help our farmers grow new market opportunities, and produce and sell our product in India, a growing market for our apples and lentils.

So, I want to thank everybody involved again. President Biden, Commerce Secretary Raimondo, Ambassador Tai, and Ambassador Garcetti for making this happen. I look forward to hearing Prime Minister Modi's comments, and Foreign Minister Jaishankar for continuing to see the work that our two countries are going to do together.

I thank the President and I yield the floor.