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July 15, 2010

The Honorable Ray LaHood  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

We urge the immediate release of a plan to resolve the U.S.-Mexico cross border trucking trade dispute, which has persisted for more than a year. Mexico's retaliation lingers at the expense of vital sectors of our nation's economy, including family farmers, and a resolution to this issue cannot be prolonged.

Tariffs imposed by Mexico on U.S. agriculture products are taking a significant toll on farm families. For example, since the 20 percent tariffs were put in place in March 2009, proceeds from U.S. exports of frozen potato products have been reduced to less than half. We understand there has been a proportionate increase in Canadian exports to Mexico equivalent to the reduced exports from the U.S. This drastic change has affected potato prices and plantings and has caused farmers to make cuts to their operations.

Additionally, these tariffs are impacting processing jobs. A Pacific Northwest potato processing plant closed recently, citing the loss of exports to Mexico from the tariff as a reason for the closure. The closure of this plant alone affected approximately 240 employees, their families, and farmers who now have fewer processing options. Further, a production line in a Twin Falls, Idaho potato processing plant may also be affected due to decreased demand attributable to loss of exports to Mexico, affecting additional jobs. Through these tariffs, more than \$4 million has been added to the cost of exporting U.S. onions to buyers in Mexico, a substantial deterrent to U.S. sales, and the tariffs on fresh pears, cherries and apricots have cost growers approximately \$25 million.

Further, Mexico is a major market for many U.S. agriculture sectors, including dairy, beef, apples, dry edible beans, corn, and fresh potatoes. Producers and manufacturers are understandably concerned with the impact of the current tariffs and the future toll if this dispute is further drawn out and escalated. A solution is long overdue and critical to the future success of the U.S. agriculture industry.

For months, Administration officials have indicated that the Administration would work with Congress to resolve this dispute. However, there has been a lack of progress on a timely solution. Meanwhile, it is estimated that the tariffs could result in the loss of as many as 25,000 jobs. U.S. producers and manufacturers are rightfully frustrated, and we urge the immediate release of a proposed solution. A solution is imperative to not only achieve the lifting of the current tariffs, but also to help ward off any attempts to increase the extent and value of the retaliation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

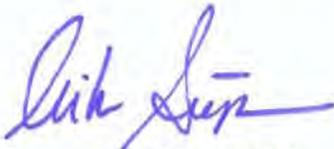
Sincerely,



MIKE CRAPO  
United States Senator



JAMES E. RISCH  
United States Senator



MIKE SIMPSON  
Member of Congress



WALT MINNICK  
Member of Congress