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Ed Avalos  
Undersecretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Avalos,

On behalf of U.S. tomato and vegetable distributors under my constituency, I am writing to respectfully request that the U.S. Department of Agriculture carefully review the impacts of the recent decision by the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to adopt certain terminology for Mexican tomatoes.

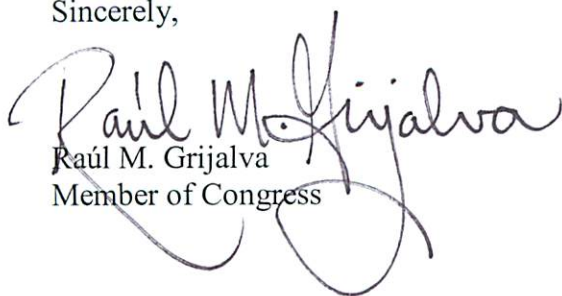
While it is my understanding that USDA/AMS has undertaken this change in order to assist with enforcement of the Tomato Suspension Agreement between the United States and Mexico, it also has come to my attention that this AMS decision is causing some confusion amongst tomato marketers, and may be causing economic harm to them.

The Tomato Suspension Agreement was not intended to change the market definition of “greenhouse” tomatoes. My constituency has informed me that with USDA making this change in terminology, of substituting “controlled environment” and “adapted environment” for Mexican “greenhouse tomatoes,” have caused economic harm to US-based companies that distribute these tomatoes.

I respectfully request a thorough review of the economic impacts and full consideration for Agricultural Marketing Service to cease using non-market recognized terminology for Mexican tomatoes. Also, if there is intent to start using new terminology, this process should be conducted in an open, transparent manner that allows for industry input before a change is formally adopted. Until such process occurs, USDA/AMS should go back to the previous market terminology, of simply “greenhouse” tomatoes, in its Market News reports.

I thank you in advance for your time and attention to this issue. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

  
Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress