

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 14, 2019

The Honorable Robert E. Lighthizer
United States Trade Representative
600 17th St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20508

Dear Ambassador Lighthizer:

We are writing to express our concerns about reports that the administration may be exploring the inclusion of a so-called “seasonality” provision in legislation implementing the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). As Members of Congress who support free, fair, and reciprocal trade between the United States and its trading partners around the globe, we strongly object to adding any seasonality provision that conflicts with the intent of the agreement.

We were pleased that a seasonality provision was not included in USMCA when the agreement was finalized by the U.S., Mexico, and Canada last year. Seasonality, whereby certain agricultural products could be subjected to numerous seasonal and regional dumping duties at various times throughout the year, runs counter to the spirit of a free trade agreement intended to tear down both tariffs and non-tariff barriers to trade.

Using USMCA as a vehicle for pursuing seasonal agriculture trade remedies risks pitting different regions of the country against each other. And, if successful, this tactic will result in higher prices for U.S. consumers, while reducing availability, selection, and quality in the supermarket aisle for items such as tomatoes, avocados, bell peppers, watermelons, strawberries and blueberries, just to name a few.

Consumers in the U.S. currently enjoy the lowest food costs in the world, with just 6.4 percent of U.S. income going toward food. U.S. per capita consumption of fresh vegetables stood at 126.8 pounds per year in 1993, before the implementation of NAFTA. In 2016, U.S. per capita consumption of fresh vegetables had reached 145.1 pounds per year, a 14 percent increase.

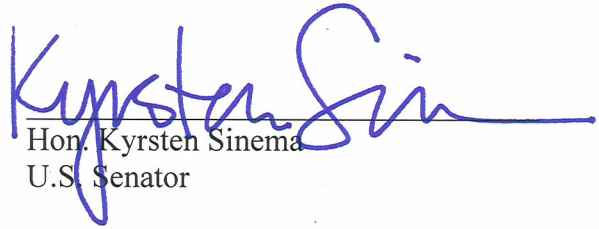
Some fresh fruits and vegetables, however, simply are not available in sufficient volume from the U.S. in certain months. U.S. companies have found significant value in working with farms in Mexico and Canada to produce and export the foods that contribute to healthful eating habits for U.S. consumers.

We strongly oppose the inclusion of any agriculture seasonality provisions in USMCA implementing legislation, as they would run counter to consumer preferences, undermine the spirit of the trilateral free trade agreement, and harm U.S. industries in order to artificially support a small segment of regional growers’ interests.

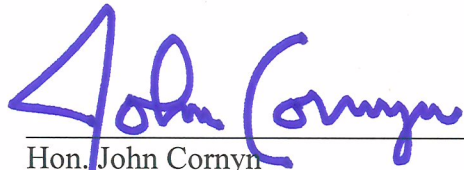
Sincerely,



Hon. Martha McSally
U.S. Senator



Hon. Kyrsten Sinema
U.S. Senator



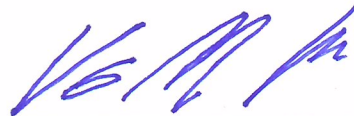
Hon. John Cornyn
U.S. Senator



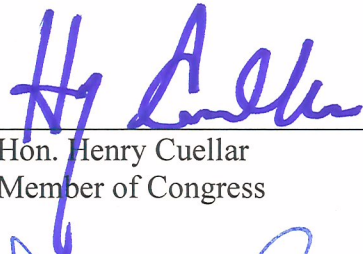
Hon. Ted Cruz
U.S. Senator




Hon. David Schweikert
Member of Congress



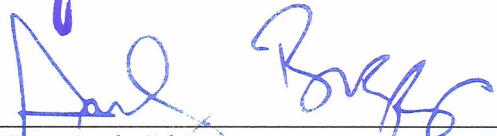
Hon. Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress



Hon. Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress



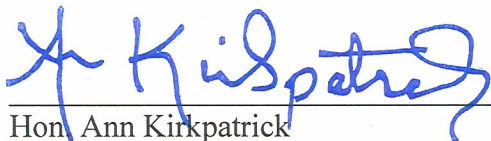
Hon. Will Hurd
Member of Congress



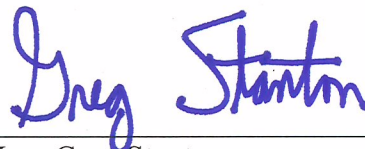
Hon. Andy Biggs
Member of Congress



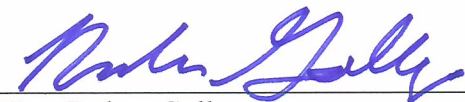
Hon. Debbie Lesko
Member of Congress



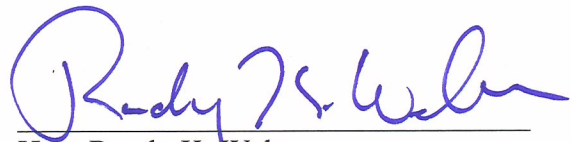
Hon. Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress



Hon. Greg Stanton
Member of Congress



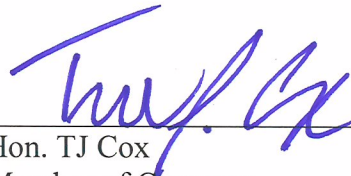
Hon. Ruben Gallego
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Hon. Randy K. Weber
Member of Congress



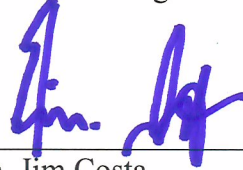
Hon. Filemon Vela
Member of Congress



Hon. TJ Cox
Member of Congress



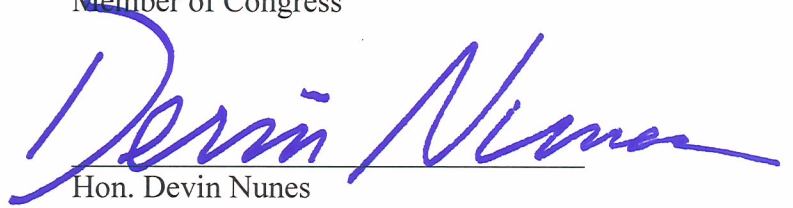
Hon. Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress



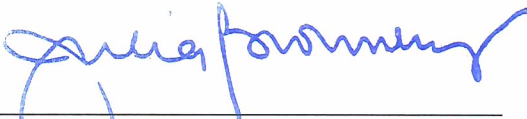
Hon. Jim Costa
Member of Congress



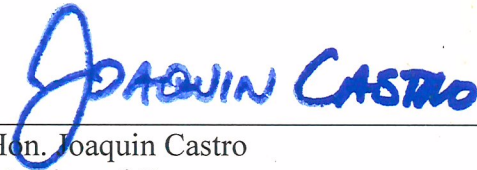
Hon. Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress



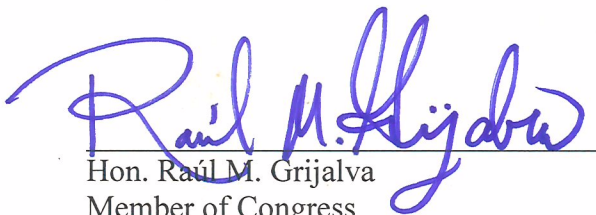
Hon. Devin Nunes
Member of Congress



Hon. Julia Brownley
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Hon. Joaquin Castro
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Hon. Raúl M. Grijalva
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