

 **FARMERS** *for* **FREE TRADE**

November 29, 2022

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader Schumer and Leader McConnell:

We are writing to ask for your help in securing the Senate confirmation of Doug McKalip to serve as Chief Agricultural Negotiator for the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative and Alexis Taylor to serve as Under Secretary of Agriculture for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs and. We ask that the U.S. Senate confirm these highly qualified nominees to these important posts before the end of this year.

U.S. agriculture is the strongest and most productive in the world. Trade is vital to the health of the U.S. agricultural economy and, in today's global market, standing still is falling behind. Our food and agriculture sectors need Mr. McKalip and Ms. Taylor confirmed so that the U.S. can continue to grow overseas markets for our food and agriculture products.

It takes years to build relationships and trust with overseas buyers. While other countries are entering into new trade deals, our two key agriculture trade officials remain unconfirmed two years into the Biden Administration. This is unacceptable and is damaging the competitiveness of U.S. food and agriculture.

While the U.S. has completed four trade agreements since 2010, including the modernization of NAFTA, China has entered into 10 new agreements, Japan has entered seven, the EU has entered eight, and Canada has entered eight. Several key U.S. trade partners are outpacing the U.S. in the benefits of their trade policies, with the EU and China experiencing lower tariffs and other reduced trade barriers on an estimated \$553 billion and \$420 billion in total trade, compared with the U.S.' \$171 billion.<sup>[1]</sup> If we are not aggressively pursuing new market opportunities, we will also face long-term weakness in this sector with devastating impacts for rural America.

U.S. agriculture has faced unprecedented challenges over the past several years. Between weather, transportation disruptions, increased foreign competition and the strengthening dollar, our nation's food and agriculture industries are facing significant headwinds. Twenty percent of American farm revenue comes from exports and America's farmers, ranchers, food processors, and manufacturers rely on complex and highly integrated supply chains that stretch across international borders. The food and agriculture products we export support over 1,000,000 U.S. jobs. As such, a pro-food and agriculture trade policy is a worker-centered trade policy. Swift confirmation of Mr. McKalip and Ms. Taylor is vital in supporting these U.S. workers, delivering for rural communities, and competing in global markets.

President Biden announced his intent to nominate Ms. Taylor and Mr. McKalip in May and June respectively. The Senate Finance Committee unanimously approved Mr. McKalip's nomination on September 7<sup>th</sup>. The Senate Agriculture Committee voted unanimously on September 27<sup>th</sup> to advance Ms. Taylor's nomination.

Despite unanimous support by the committees and widespread and bipartisan support the Senate has yet to confirm these highly skilled candidates. Time is of the essence to confirm these nominees.

American agriculture needs experienced leaders representing us in international negotiations. We urge the U.S. Senate to confirm Doug McKalip and Alexis Taylor by the end of this year and appreciate your assistance with this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Agribusiness Association of Iowa

American Cotton Shippers Association

American Farm Bureau Federation

American Feed Industry Association

American Peanut Council

American Seed Trade Association

American Soybean Association

Animal Health Institute

BASF

Bayer

Biotechnology Innovation Organization

California Walnut Commission

CoBank

Corn Refiners Association

Corteva Agriscience

Distilled Spirits Council of the United States

Farmers for Free Trade

Fresh Produce Association of the Americas

Global Cold Chain Alliance

International Dairy Foods Association

Iowa Soybean Association

Leather and Hide Council of America

Meat Import Council of America

Michigan Agri-Business Association

Michigan Bean Shippers

Michigan Farm Bureau

National Association of State Departments of Agriculture

National Association of Wheat Growers

National Confectioners Association

National Corn Growers Association

National Cotton Council

National Council of Farmer Cooperatives

National Grain and Feed Association

National Milk Producers Federation

National Oilseed Processors Association

National Pork Producers Council

National Potato Council

National Sorghum Producers

National Turkey Federation

North American Export Grain Association

North American Meat Institute

North American Millers' Association

North American Renderers Association

Northeast Agribusiness and Feed Alliance

Northwest Horticultural Council

Ohio AgriBusiness Association

Oregon Feed & Grain Association

Pet Food Institute

Pinion, LLP

Potato Growers of Michigan, Inc.

Reckitt – Mead Johnson Nutrition

Sweetener Users Association

Syngenta

Texas Grain and Feed Association

U.S. Apple Association

U.S. Dairy Export Council

USA Poultry & Egg Export Council

USA Rice

World Perspectives, Inc.