

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 2, 2020

The Honorable Robert Lighthizer
United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20508

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Ambassador Lighthizer and Secretary Perdue:

The current global crisis has put a spotlight on the importance of advancing fairer trade rules in order to keep American-made food products moving reliably to markets overseas. We are writing today to underscore our concerns about a campaign by the European Union to misuse protections meant for geographical indications (GI) and to restrict the use of traditional wine terms in order to block competition from accurately labeled U.S. food and wine exports. This is a critical issue that erodes U.S. access to key markets overseas and poses a serious threat to the economic health of farmers, ranchers, food and beverage manufacturers, and exporters here at home.

The European Union has used GIs to raise trade barriers for products labeled with common food terms, as well as traditional wine terms. Examples include, but are not limited to, bologna, parmesan, chateau, and feta. We urge the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to draw upon the type of precedents and commitments established in the United States-Canada-Mexico Agreement (USMCA) to further strengthen protections for U.S. producers by negotiating agricultural market access safeguards for products marketed using specific common food terms, traditional terms, or legitimate plant and grape varieties in all future U.S. trade negotiations, particularly those of importance to U.S. cheese, meat, and wine producers. We view ongoing negotiations with the United Kingdom and Kenya as opportunities to further strengthen the U.S. position on common food names and traditional wine terms.

Without decisive action to build further upon the progress made to date on intellectual property measures, the European Union will continue to raise unfair trade barriers and seek to establish harmful GI policies in negotiations with our trading partners. It is, therefore, critical that USTR and USDA advance a consistent trade policy that prioritizes securing specific market access assurances for products that use common food terms, traditional terms, or the names of legitimate plant and grape varieties in all trade-related discussions.

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The Honorable Sonny Perdue

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On behalf of the farmers, ranchers, food and beverage manufacturers, and exporters we represent, thank you for the work that you have already accomplished on this issue. We look forward to working alongside your offices to further strengthen protections for food and wine producers.



Jim Costa
Member of Congress

Sincerely,



Jodey Arrington
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



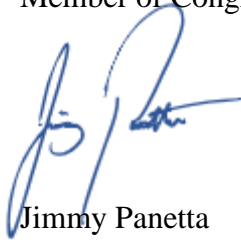
Dusty Johnson
Member of Congress



Ron Kind
Member of Congress



Mike Gallagher
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Mike Kelly
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Roger Marshall, M.D.
Member of Congress

TJ Cox
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Brian Fitzpatrick
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Anthony Brindisi
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Jared Huffman
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Emanuel Cleaver, II
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Suzan Delbene
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David Rouzer
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