

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 11, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

We are requesting your assistance on opening the Japanese market for U.S. fresh table stock potatoes. This is a vital international trade issue and if successful, the U.S. potato industry estimates that this access will result in an additional \$150 million per year in exports.

Table stock access to Japan was first requested almost 30 years ago. It was elevated to a top priority in U.S.-Japan plant health negotiations in September 2019. However, despite the efforts of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Japan continues to delay substantive negotiations on table stock access, including with respect to our most recent request for Japan to provide a Pest Risk Assessment (PRA).

Japan already conducted a thorough review of U.S. fresh potatoes in 2006 when the market was opened for U.S. potatoes for processing. During this review, the U.S. potato industry addressed all Japanese technical concerns with comprehensive mitigations. There is no valid phytosanitary justification for the market to remain closed or for the government's current refusal to negotiate.

The U.S. potato industry has a proud history of exporting fresh potatoes to many markets in the Indo-Pacific, including South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand. These exports occur safely and routinely throughout the year, providing benefits for the consumers in those countries and our growers here in the United States.

We strongly urge you to elevate this issue with your counterparts in Japan with the goal of receiving a PRA before the upcoming bilateral negotiation this Fall 2023. We believe that a resolution is only possible with strong political support in the United States.

Thank you for your attention to this important trade matter for U.S. agriculture.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



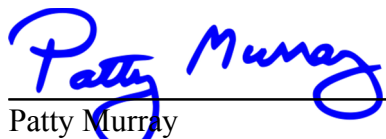
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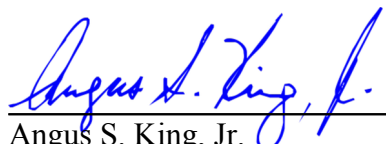
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United States Senator



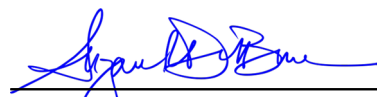
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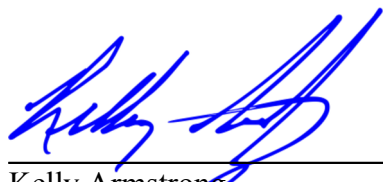
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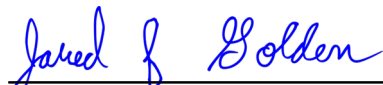
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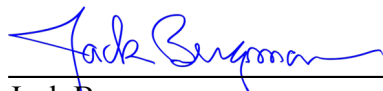
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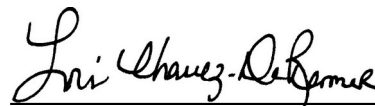
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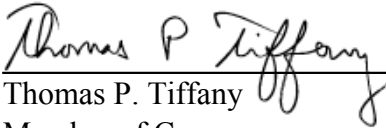
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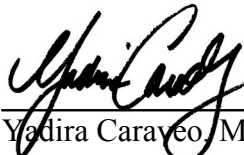


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