

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 5, 2023

Ambassador Katherine Tai
United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20508

CC: The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture

Dear Ambassador Tai:

Increasing exports to Asia is an important way to support U.S. agricultural industries and grow jobs in the United States, and blueberries are an important commodity, with exports worth over \$245 million in 2021. We urge you to work with your Japanese counterparts to support U.S. farmers by eliminating Japan's frozen blueberry tariffs.

The U.S.-Japan Trade Agreement, which entered into force in 2020, eliminated Japan's tariffs on fresh and dried blueberries, but omitted frozen blueberries from this relief. U.S. frozen blueberry exports to Japan continue to face a 6.0 percent or 9.6 percent tariff in Japan, depending on sugar content. In this agreement, Japan also lifted tariffs on frozen blackberries, raspberries and strawberries, leaving frozen blueberries as an outlier in terms of market access.

Japan's tariffs on frozen blueberries have made American exports non-competitive compared to countries that are members of the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and can freely trade with Japan in all blueberry products. As a result, American frozen blueberry exports to Japan have been declining relative to those from top competitors like Canada and the European Union (EU) who enjoy tariff-free trade with Japan for all forms of blueberries.

The U.S. share of the Japanese frozen blueberry import market has declined year-over-year following CPTPP from 21 percent in 2018 to 15 percent in 2022. Conversely, Canada has maintained its large market share, accounting for 57 percent of total import market share as of 2022. In the same time period, the EU has more than doubled its market share to nearly 9 percent.

This inequality has been unaddressed for nearly four years, threatening business relationships between American farmers and importers in the third-largest international market for U.S. frozen blueberries.

We recognize that the trade pillar of the administration's signature trade initiative in the region, the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) is focused on non-tariff barriers, and we are not requesting a new negotiating phase of the U.S.-Japan Trade Agreement. Frozen blueberries represent a relatively small share of bilateral trade—less than 0.1% of the value of all U.S. agricultural exports to Japan in 2022. But for producers in our states, Japan is a critical market, and the tariff on American frozen blueberries threatens the viability of their businesses and the stability of the domestic market for both fresh and frozen blueberries.

We urge you to pursue a technical amendment to the U.S.-Japan Trade Agreement to ensure U.S. frozen blueberries receive the same duty-free market access in Japan as fresh or dried blueberries, as well as other frozen berries. Doing so will allow U.S. farmers to compete on level terms with other blueberry exporting countries and would help save and revitalize market opportunities for U.S. berry farmers.

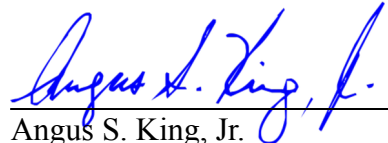
Sincerely,



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



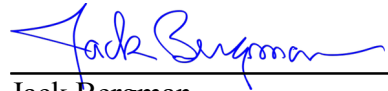
David G. Valadao
Member of Congress



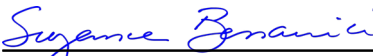
Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Rick W. Allen
Member of Congress



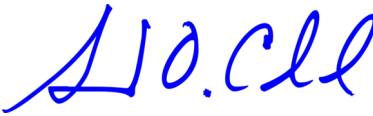
Jack Bergman
Member of Congress



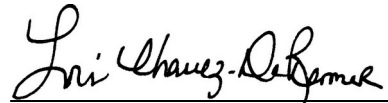
Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Lori Chavez-DeRemer
Member of Congress



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



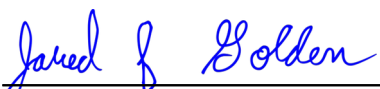
Jim Costa
Member of Congress



Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



John S. Duarte
Member of Congress



Jared Golden
Member of Congress



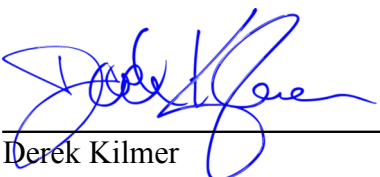
Val Hoyle
Member of Congress



Bill Huizenga
Member of Congress



Kevin Kiley
Member of Congress



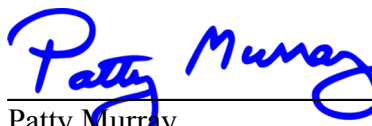
Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



Doug LaMalfa
Member of Congress



John R. Moolenaar
Member of Congress



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Dan Newhouse
Member of Congress



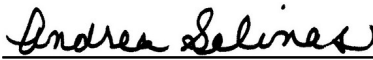
Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



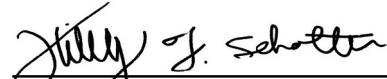
Marie Gluesenkamp Perez
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



Hillary J. Scholten
Member of Congress



Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress



Austin Scott
Member of Congress



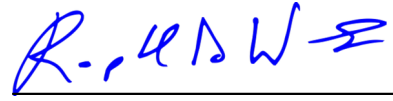
Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress



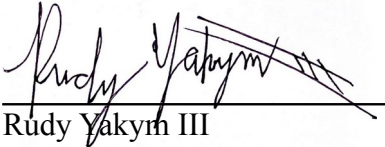
Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Jefferson Van Drew
Member of Congress



Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



Rudy Yakym III
Member of Congress