

June 26, 2014

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
U.S. Senate
Chairwoman
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and
Forestry
133 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
U.S. Senate
Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and
Forestry
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Frank D. Lucas
U.S. House of Representatives
Chairman
Committee on Agriculture
2311 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Collin C. Peterson
U.S. House of Representatives
Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture
2109 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow, Ranking Member Cochran, Chairman Lucas and Ranking Member Peterson:

On behalf of the undersigned stakeholders, we are writing in regards to the U.S. Mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) rule and its potential impact on the U.S. economy. If the World Trade Organization (WTO) determines the rule violates our trade obligations to our two largest export markets, Canada and Mexico, it could authorize those countries to subject an array of U.S. exports to retaliatory tariffs. Canada, Mexico and the United States comprise one of the most competitive and successful regional economic platforms in the world. A finding of non-compliance would surely result in serious economic harm to U.S. firms that export to our neighbors.

WTO litigation determined that the previous COOL rule regarding muscle cuts of meat is non-compliant with WTO obligations because of a discriminatory effect toward Canadian and Mexican animals. A revised version of the rule is now under WTO review. The governments of both Canada and Mexico regard the revised rule as more discriminatory than the previous version. Canada has already issued a preliminary retaliation list targeting a broad spectrum of commodities and manufactured products that will affect every state in the country. Mexico has not yet announced a preliminary retaliation list.

We respectfully submit that it would be intolerable for the United States to maintain, even briefly, a rule that has been deemed non-compliant by the WTO. With little potential for quick Congressional action after a WTO final adjudication, we request that Congress authorize and direct the Secretary of Agriculture to suspend indefinitely the revised COOL rule for muscle cuts of meat upon a final adjudication of non-compliance with WTO obligations.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter and for protecting American food production, agriculture and manufacturing from economic harm.

Sincerely,

Agri Beef Co.
American Bakers Association
American Beverage Association
American Frozen Food Institute
American Soybean Association
American Peanut Product Manufacturers, Inc.
Animal Health Institute
Archer Daniels Midland Company
Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturers Association
California Strawberry Commission
California Walnut Commission
Campbell Soup Company
Cargill, Incorporated
The Coca-Cola Company
ConAgra Foods, Inc.
Corn Refiners Association
Distilled Spirits Council of the United States
Food and Consumer Products of Canada
Food Marketing Institute
General Mills, Inc.
Grocery Manufacturers Association
The Hershey Company
Hillshire Brands
H.J. Heinz Company
Hormel Foods Corporation
Ingredion Incorporated
International Dairy Foods Association
International Sleep Products Association
Kellogg Company
Kraft Foods Group, Inc.
Mars, Incorporated
Midwest Food Processors Association
Mondelez Global LLC
National Association of Manufacturers

National Beef Packing Co., LLC
National Cattleman's Beef Association
National Confectioners Association
National Corn Growers Association
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Foreign Trade Council
National Grain and Feed Association
National Oilseed Processors Association
National Pork Producers Council
Nestle USA
Nestle Waters North America
North American Blueberry Council
North American Equipment Dealers Association
North American Export Grain Association
North American Meat Association
PepsiCo
Remy International Inc.
Roquette America
Smithfield Foods
Snack Food Association
Sweetener Users Association
Tate & Lyle
Tyson Foods, Inc.
United Producers, Inc.
USA Rice Federation
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
U.S. Premium Beef, LLC
Wine Institute

cc: Members of the United States Congress