

FRANK D. LUCAS, OKLAHOMA,
CHAIRMAN
BOB GOODLATTE, VIRGINIA,
VICE CHAIRMAN
STEVE KING, IOWA
RANDY NEUGEBAUER, TEXAS
MIKE ROGERS, ALABAMA
K. MICHAEL CONAWAY, TEXAS
GLENN THOMPSON, PENNSYLVANIA
BOB GIBBS, OHIO
AUSTIN SCOTT, GEORGIA
SCOTT R. TIPTON, COLORADO
ERIC A. "RICK" CRAWFORD, ARKANSAS
SCOTT DESJARLAIS, TENNESSEE
CHRISTOPHER P. GIBSON, NEW YORK
VICKY HARTZLER, MISSOURI
REID J. RIBBLE, WISCONSIN
KRISTI L. NOEM, SOUTH DAKOTA
DAN BENISHEK, MICHIGAN
JEFF DENHAM, CALIFORNIA
STEPHEN LEE FINCHER, TENNESSEE
DOUG LAMALFA, CALIFORNIA
RICHARD HUDSON, NORTH CAROLINA
RODNEY DAVIS, ILLINOIS
CHRIS COLLINS, NEW YORK
TED S. YOHO, FLORIDA
VANCE M. McALLISTER, LOUISIANA

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture
Room 1301, Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6001

(202) 225-2171
(202) 225-0917 FAX

COLLIN C. PETERSON, MINNESOTA
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER
MIKE MCINTYRE, NORTH CAROLINA
DAVID SCOTT, GEORGIA
JIM COSTA, CALIFORNIA
TIMOTHY J. WALZ, MINNESOTA
KURT SCHRADER, OREGON
MARCIA L. FUDGE, OHIO
JAMES P. McGOVERN, MASSACHUSETTS
SUZAN K. DELBENE, WASHINGTON
GLORIA NEGRETE McLEOD, CALIFORNIA
FILEMON VELA, TEXAS
MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM, NEW MEXICO
ANN M. KUSTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE
RICHARD M. NOLAN, MINNESOTA
PETE P. GALLEGOS, TEXAS
WILLIAM L. ENYART, ILLINOIS
JUAN VARGAS, CALIFORNIA
CHERI BUSTOS, ILLINOIS
SEAN PATRICK MALONEY, NEW YORK
JOE COURTNEY, CONNECTICUT
JOHN GARAMENDI, CALIFORNIA

NICOLE SCOTT,
STAFF DIRECTOR
KEVIN J. KRAMP,
CHIEF COUNSEL
ROBERT L. LAREW,
MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

August 7, 2014

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
US Department of Agriculture
14th and Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We write to you today to request that you immediately restore Federal grain inspection services at the Port of Vancouver in Washington State.

In a recent letter to industry stakeholders, Under Secretary for Agriculture, Edward Avalos claimed unspecified security concerns as a basis for withholding statutorily mandated inspection services from the grain export facility at the port.

In a recent press story, you are quoted as stating "it is incumbent on me to make sure that any decisions are made with safety in mind." Were there to be documented concerns for the safety of Federal employees in this facility, we would stand behind the decision to withhold inspection. Indeed, in briefings of our staff, Mr. Larry Mitchell, Administrator of the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration claimed security concerns but when asked, was unable to provide any specifics. Our staff has requested a copy of the report submitted to Mr. Mitchell weeks ago by your security assessment team which had been sent to the facility last October as well as in July of this year. Short of receiving a copy of the security report, we have requested a briefing by the security team to better understand the concerns presumably preventing assignment of federal inspectors to the facility. Both requests have been repeatedly denied.

Our staff has since spoken directly with the USDA officials who conducted the security assessment of the port facility. Those officials have confirmed that there are no security concerns that would prevent USDA grain inspectors from entering or exiting the facility through the vehicular gate, or by helicopter. The official did recommend that the vehicle transporting the USDA inspectors be placarded identifying it as a USDA vehicle, a measure that is seemingly easy to resolve.

As someone who has spent considerable time and energy fighting to open international markets for our agricultural products, we know you are concerned about the potential loss of those markets due to the closure of this important export terminal. We ask once again that you immediately restore inspection services so that grain exports can resume.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Frank D. Lucas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Frank Lucas, Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "K. Michael Conaway". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

K. Michael Conaway, Chairman
Subcommittee on General Farm
Commodities and Risk Management