

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 13, 2025

The Honorable Howard Lutnick
Secretary of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Lutnick:

As members of the House Committee on Agriculture, we write to you with great concern over the chaotic approach that the Administration has taken toward trade policy. Trade with our North American allies is vital for American farmers. Over decades, the United States has built an integrated agricultural system that relies upon Mexico and Canada both as export markets and for vital inputs. This is not a system that can be upended overnight. The on and off approach that the Administration has taken toward implementing and removing tariffs creates uncertainty for farmers, increases prices for consumers and leads to volatility in the marketplace. None of these outcomes benefit farm country.

Right now, across the country, many farmers are beginning to calve and are preparing for planting season. The last thing they need is uncertainty about whether fertilizer and energy prices will shoot up or if they can move their cattle across the northern border to feedlots in Canada. In calendar year 2024 the U.S. exported \$176 billion in agricultural products.¹ Mexico and Canada were the top two destinations for U.S. agricultural exports at \$30.31 billion and \$28.38 billion respectively.² Combined, that is roughly a third of total U.S. agricultural exports. Contrary to some statements, U.S. consumers cannot just absorb those products. Different consumer preferences and varied production levels dictate what we export and what is sold domestically. Certain products that are popular in other countries will not just become popular in the U.S. We need foreign markets so that farmers and ranchers can recoup the value of their products. Farmers are already facing down an agricultural trade deficit, which widened in January.³ The implementation of tariffs could exacerbate it.⁴

There is nothing fun about tariffs for farmers. The more the Administration threatens to implement and then remove tariffs the less reliable we appear. This leads to an unstable business environment and harms our credibility with our neighbors. If the Administration continues to threaten and implement tariffs it will force Mexico and Canada to seek partnerships with other countries. That will mean lost long-term market access for American farmers. It is very easy to give up market access, it is much more difficult to get it back.

American farmers have fought hard for decades to gain access to foreign markets, and they rely on partnerships with our allies in North America to be successful and turn a profit. The Administration's current stance on trade policy is a bad deal for farmers and a bad deal for Americans. We urge you to pursue trade negotiation through established channels and abandon the chaotic approach to tariffs that the administration has employed.

Sincerely

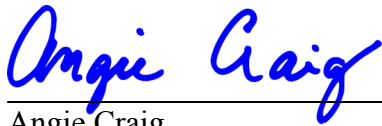
¹ U.S. agricultural exports close 2024 on a strong note. USDA Foreign Agricultural Service. (2025, February 26). <https://www.fas.usda.gov/data/trade-spotlight-us-agricultural-exports-close-2024-on-strong-note>

² *ibid.*

³ Farm Journal. (2025, March 6). *AG trade deficit widens in January*. AgWeb. <https://www.agweb.com/markets/pro-farmer-analysis/ag-trade-deficit-widens-january>

⁴ Hirtzer, M., Peng, I., & Carey, D. (2025). *The US Has Never Imported So Much Food*. Bloomberg.

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2025-02-27/agriculture-powerhouse-us-has-never-imported-so-much-food>



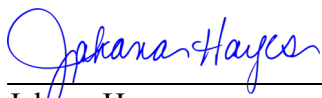
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Ranking Member, Committee on
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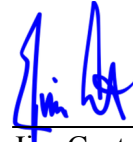
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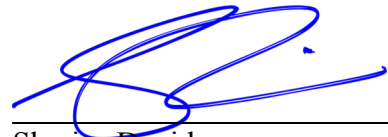
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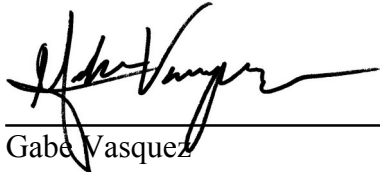
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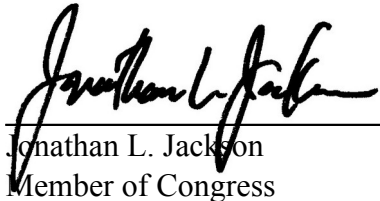
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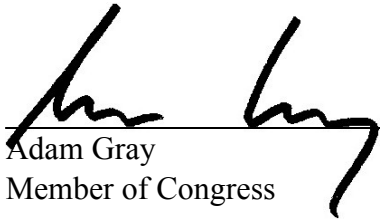
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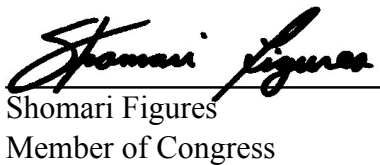
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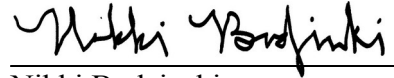
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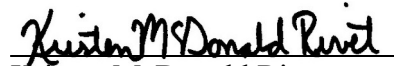
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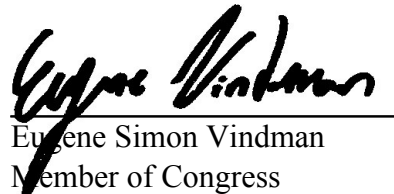
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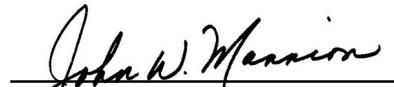
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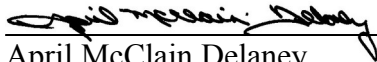
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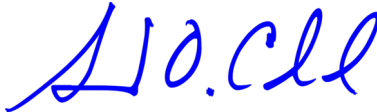
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