

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