

United States Senate

May 4, 2022

Marc Bourdon
Compagnie Maritime d'Affrètement and Compagnie Générale Maritime
5701 Lake Wright Drive
Norfolk, VA 23502

Dear Mr. Bourdon:

We are deeply concerned that U.S. agricultural producers are unable to secure containers to export their products to market amid a global food shortage. We urge you to work with American agricultural exporters to immediately expand export opportunities.

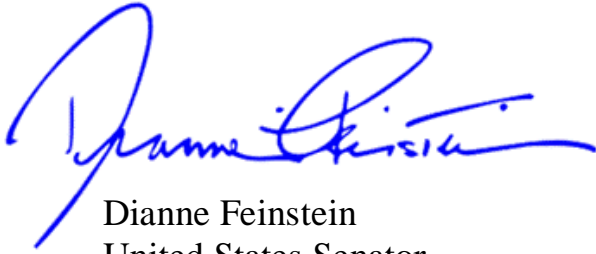
We are proud that California's agricultural production represents 13 percent of the nation's total value. California produces 400 different crops and is the nation's sole producer of many specialty crops such as certain nuts, stone fruit, and produce. Further, California produces 21 percent of the U.S. milk supply, including 50 percent of nonfat dry milk.

However, these agricultural commodities have been significantly hampered in exporting their products because of container and equipment shortages, canceled bookings, and inadequate receiving windows. According to the attached letter from several of California's major agricultural producers, three out of four containers at U.S. ports are returning to Asia empty, resulting in a significant backlog of sold product in need of transportation.

As a result of these delays, the California agricultural industry has lost \$2.1 billion in exports between May and September 2021. Nearly 1.4 billion pounds of almonds, requiring more than 30,000 containers, need to be moved between now and July 31, 2022, with similar amounts for walnuts. The California dairy industry has experienced \$1.5 billion in losses, with some now resorting to airfreight. Perishable exports, such as fresh produce and stone fruit, cannot be stored or held, making these delays even more costly. In a tragic twist, the inability of farmers to move their products to market is now occurring against the backdrop of worldwide food shortages.

We urge you to work with California agricultural producers to ensure their products, especially perishables, expeditiously get to export markets worldwide during this important season. We look forward to working with you to achieve our shared goals. Thank you for your attention to our request.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator

Attachment: Letter to Secretary Vilsack, Secretary Buttigieg, and Director Deese (dated April 25, 2022).