



United States Senate

April 4, 2018

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary of Agriculture
Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I write today to express my concern that the recent trade actions taken by the Trump administration will have extremely negative economic consequences for farmers, ranchers, and agricultural workers who are facing retaliatory actions by our trading partners. With over \$20 billion in agricultural exports, including over \$2 billion in exports to China, California's agriculture sector is heavily reliant on foreign markets, and the consequences of the increasing trade disputes could be severe.

As you know, last month President Trump announced global tariffs on steel and aluminum products. In response, China has increased tariffs on 128 American products worth \$3 billion. Many of these items are agricultural products grown in and exported from California.

California's vast and diverse agricultural footprint has allowed our farmers' products to reach countries around the globe. In fact, California farmers grow 100 percent of all exported almonds, walnuts, raisins, plums, grapes, kiwis, dates, and figs. In addition, popular fruits such as avocados, blackberries, raspberries, and strawberries are all grown almost exclusively in California. All of these products, including certain California wines, will now be subject to a 15 percent tariff when exported to China, which is a top destination for nearly all of the aforementioned exports.

President Trump has stated that the recent tariff announcements are intended to protect American jobs, but so far the only concrete result appears to be fewer markets and higher costs for farmers and ranchers. International trade is increasingly important and I am concerned that the voices of our farmers are not being heard by the administration.

As the head of the department whose mission is to promote agricultural production and help rural America thrive, your voice is an important one to educate the president on the collateral damage of trade actions. I respectfully ask that you provide answers to the following questions:

- To what extent has your department engaged with the Secretary of Commerce and President Trump prior to the announcement of any recent tariffs?
- What actions is the Department of Agriculture taking to help open new markets, provide export and finance assistance or other assistance to farmers negatively affected by these new tariffs?
- Has the department conducted outreach to offer assistance to farmers who grow the products that are targeted by any retaliatory tariffs and now face additional barriers to selling their products?

Earlier this year, President Trump stated that in every decision his administration makes, he aims to honor America's strong farming legacy, but putting farmers in the crosshairs of an international trade dispute does just the opposite. Hardworking farmers in California and throughout the United States deserve better than to be a pawn in a global trade war.

As the Secretary of Agriculture, please let me know what actions you have taken or intend to take in order to ensure that farmers, not only in California but across America can remain competitive on the global market. Thank you for your attention to this matter and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dianne Feinstein". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "D".

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator