



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 03, 2015

Growers Stand Up for Potatoes on Capitol Hill

On February 23-26, NPC hosted the 2015 Potato D.C. Fly-In, where more than 150 U.S. potato growers and industry partners from across the country came to Washington, D.C., to advocate for the industry's most pressing federal policy priorities. Growers blanketed Capitol Hill, meeting with 136 U.S. Senate and House offices representing 22 states and met with federal regulators at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). During their Hill visits, growers urged Congress to address key industry issues, including: funding for the Potato Research Special Grant; Pollinator Health; Truck Weight Reform; and Voluntary GMO Labeling.



Potato D.C. Fly-In participants pose for a group photo before visiting members of Congress on Capitol Hill

The 2015 Fly-In featured presentations by a number of lawmakers, many of whom were influential in reversing the ban on fresh white potatoes in the WIC program. Fly-In attendees heard from Senators Susan Collins (R-Maine), Angus King (I-Maine), Steve Daines (R-Mont.), Representatives Suzan DelBene (D-Wash.) and Mike Simpson (R-Idaho), who all applauded the recent WIC victory. Rep. Mike Pompeo (R-Kans.) joined the group to address GMO labeling, Rep. Suzan DelBene (D-Wash.) briefed the group on immigration reform and Rep. Austin Scott (R-Ga.) discussed the pollinator health issue. The common

theme among members of Congress who were a part of the event was the importance of participants willing to make the trip and share their story. “We’re here to help and can communicate your concerns much more effectively to our colleagues and regulators if we know what is on your mind,” said Senator King.



Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine)



Rep. Mike Simpson (R-Idaho)

Fly-In attendees heard from a number of renowned political strategists and commentators, including: Jonah Goldberg from the *National Review Online*; Stuart Rothenberg of the *Rothenberg Political Report* and *Roll Call*; and Reid Wilson of the *Washington Post's Read In*. Katty Kay of *BBC World News America* was also on hand to give participants her views on the current domestic and international climate. Additional speakers included Alexis Taylor, with USDA's Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services and Anita Pease from EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs.



BBC World News America Anchor, Katty Kay



National Review Online Editor, Jonah Goldberg

On Wednesday, NPC hosted the annual Friends of Potato Growers Congressional Potato Luncheon in the Rayburn House Office Building, where growers and elected officials joined at the lunch line for a hearty helping of potatoes. House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) and Rep. Collin Peterson (D-Minn.) dropped by the luncheon to address the House 2015 legislative agenda, take questions and thank participants for making the trip to share their concerns.



*House Majority Leader
Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.)*



*Rep. Collin Peterson (D-
Minn.)*

For photos of the Fly-In and other industry events, please visit [NPC's Facebook page](#).

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The National Potato Council is the advocate for the economic well-being of U.S. potato growers on federal legislative, regulatory, environmental, and trade issues. NPC supports the U.S. potato industry by monitoring issues affecting the strength and viability of the potato industry, influencing regulators and legislators on issues crucial to the industry's long term success, ensuring fair market access for potatoes and potato products, and bringing the unique issues and interests of diverse growing regions in the U.S. together on a national level.