



# News Release

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## Potato Growers Converge on Capitol Hill

### *NPC's Potato D.C. Fly-In Presses for Industry Policy Priorities*

**Washington, D.C.** – More than 160 potato growers and industry partners from across the country met Feb. 25-28 in Washington, D.C., to advocate for the industry's most pressing federal policy priorities. During the four-day Potato D.C. Fly-In, grassroots activists met with federal regulators at USDA and EPA, and took to Capitol Hill, meeting with 129 U.S. Senate and House offices, including 42 which had not been contacted during previous Fly-Ins.

In addition to breaking previous attendance records, the 2013 meeting boasted the widest geographic range in Fly-In history. Growers from 22 states, including Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, Oklahoma, and Texas, delivered the industry's message to more offices on Capitol Hill than any prior Fly-In.



*Congressman Doc Hastings (right) meets with Washington state growers during the Fly-In's Capitol Hill Day.*



*House Agriculture Committee Ranking Member Collin Peterson (left) and Congressman Mike Simpson (right) address Fly-In attendees during a session on the federal budget.*

The 2013 Fly-In also featured a number of high-level political, policy, and industry speakers, including House Agriculture Committee Ranking Member Collin Peterson (D-Minn.) and Congressman Mike Simpson (R-Idaho), who addressed federal budget challenges and their impact on a new farm bill and other agriculture-related issues.

Former Congressman Tom Davis (R-Va.) offered attendees his analysis of the current state of affairs for the Republican Party and its path forward for the 2014 elections and beyond. Renowned political strategist and commentator Donna Brazile also spoke about how the state of today's politics is impacting the efforts of Congress and the White House to govern our country.

Additional speakers included Dr. Sonny Ramaswamy, director of USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (APHIS), U.S. Trade Ambassador Isi Siddiqui, Chuck Conner, president of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, Bill Hoagland, senior vice president of the Bipartisan Policy Center, Nathan Gonzales, deputy editor of The Rothenberg Political Report, and Tom Stenzel, president and CEO of the United Fresh Produce Association.

After two days of policy and political briefings, attendees took to Capitol Hill to lead the industry's advocacy efforts, focusing on four top priorities: preserving funding for specialty crop programs in a new five-year farm bill; reforming the agricultural guest worker program as part of comprehensive immigration reform; gaining Mexico's full market access for U.S. fresh potatoes; and ending the ban on fresh potatoes in the WIC federal supplemental nutrition program.

NPC also hosted the annual Friends of Potato Growers Congressional Potato Luncheon in the House Agriculture Committee hearing room, attended by members of Congress and congressional staff.

For photos of the Fly-In and other industry events, please visit NPC's Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/nationalpotatocouncil](http://www.facebook.com/nationalpotatocouncil).



*Senator Angus King (right) greets members of the Maine Fly-In delegation in the hall of a congressional office building.*

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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.*