



# News Release

1300 L Street NW · Suite 910 · Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 682-9456 · fax (202) 682-0333 · [www.nationalpotatocouncil.org](http://www.nationalpotatocouncil.org)

## MEDIA INQUIRIES:

Mark Szymanski  
(202) 682-9456  
[marks@nationalpotatocouncil.org](mailto:marks@nationalpotatocouncil.org)

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## **Growers Stand Up for Potatoes on Capitol Hill** *NPC's 2014 Potato D.C. Fly-In Advances Policy Priorities*

**Washington, D.C.** – At this week's Potato D.C. Fly-In, more than 160 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 met with federal regulators at USDA and EPA, and blanketed Capitol Hill, meeting with 166 U.S. Senate and House offices representing 26 states – which made it the largest outreach effort in Fly-In history.



*Senate Agriculture Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) addresses the Fly-In on the specialty crop funding and policy initiatives contained in the 2014 Farm Bill.*

During their Hill visits, growers urged Congress to address key industry issues, including: guest worker reform; increasing the federal highway truck weight limit; overturning the ban on fresh potatoes in the WIC federal nutrition program; increasing funding for potato pest, disease, and breeding research programs; and providing the president with trade promotion authority to aid in the negotiation of trade agreements.

The 2014 Fly-In also featured a number of high-level political and policy speakers, including three of the four leaders of the Agriculture Committees. Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.), House Agriculture Committee

Chairman Frank Lucas (R-Okla.), and House Agriculture Committee Ranking Member Collin Peterson (D-Minn.) all talked about the recent passage of the 2014 Farm Bill and its continued support for the specialty crop industry.

Rep. Mike Simpson (R-Idaho) joined the group to address the bipartisan efforts to add fresh white potatoes to the WIC program, and Rep. Reid Ribble (R-Wisc.) briefed the group on truck weight reform legislation. During the welcoming reception, Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.), in her role as the Chair of the House Republican Conference, addressed the House GOP's 2014 legislative agenda.



*Fox News' Tucker Carlson provided his unique insight into the current political environment and looked ahead at the upcoming midterm and presidential elections.*



*Montana growers meet with Sen. John Tester (D-Mont.) to discuss issues of truck weight reform and reversing the current ban on fresh white potatoes in the WIC program.*

Fly-In attendees heard from a number of renowned political strategist and commentators, including Bob Beckel and Cal Thomas, who spoke about the need for finding political common ground, and Tucker Carlson, co-host of Fox News' *Fox & Friends Weekend*. Pollsters Charlie Cook from *The Cook Political Report* and Nathan Gonzales from *The Rothenberg Political Report* previewed the 2014 and 2016 elections.

Additional speakers included Edward Avalos, USDA's Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, and Phil Karsting, Administrator of USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service.

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).

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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.*