

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 18, 2020

The Honorable Robert E. Lighthizer
U.S. Trade Representative
600 17th St. NW
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Ambassador Lighthizer:

We write to urge you to continue to advocate for increased access for United States fresh potato exports to Mexico during the course of any trade negotiations with the Mexican government.

On May 19, 2014, U.S. potato exporters were finally allowed to export fresh potatoes throughout Mexico. Unfortunately, the Mexican potato industry represented through Comité Nacional Sistema Producto Papa (CONPAPA) sued the Mexican government and the general U.S. fresh potato export ban was reinstated. Currently, this issue is pending before the Mexican Supreme Court.

We strongly support the benefits of trade between the United States and Mexico—in 2019 alone, our countries engaged in nearly \$615 billion in trade. With the recent conclusion of the United States-Mexico-Canada Free Trade Agreement (USMCA), U.S.-Mexico trade will continue to grow even more and benefit producers and consumers in both countries.

Although U.S. potato producers can ship processed, dried, and frozen potatoes to Mexico, their access to the fresh potato market has been severely restricted and exports are only permitted within an approximately sixteen-mile zone south of the U.S.-Mexico border. This limitation greatly reduces opportunities for U.S. potato producers and further limits options for Mexican consumers. We encourage you to consider the use of all available mechanisms, including the new dispute resolution authority under the USMCA, to ensure Mexico honors its agreement to allow U.S. potatoes to reach Mexican consumers.

As you continue market access conversations with Mexico, we again urge you to continue to advocate for U.S. fresh potato exports and to further strengthen U.S.-Mexico trade relations.

Sincerely,

/s/
Cory Gardner
United States Senator

/s/
James E. Risch
United States Senator

/s/
Mike Crapo
United States Senator

Cc: The Honorable Sonny Perdue, U.S. Department of Agriculture