U.S. Food and Agriculture Dialogue for Trade

North America Food & Agriculture Trade Coalition

March 16, 2017

Dear Senator:

We believe prompt confirmation of Robert Lighthizer as U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) is an essential step in putting in place a U.S. government team that can robustly engage in trade negotiations to further enhance U.S. economic growth and job creation.

The undersigned organizations, working collectively through the U.S. Food and Agriculture Dialogue for Trade, represent the diverse food and agricultural sector, which supports more than 15 million American jobs.

The Trade Expansion Act of 1962 gives USTR a central role in the development and coordination of U.S. international trade policy and oversight of negotiations with other countries. With reconsideration of our nation's most fundamental trade relationships underway, the United States needs its full team on the field as we review major agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Towards this end, our organizations are also eager to see the swift consideration and confirmation of Sonny Perdue as United States Secretary of Agriculture.

Our industry represents one of NAFTA's biggest success stories. Since the agreement was enacted, U.S. food and agricultural exports to Canada and Mexico have more than quadrupled—growing from \$8.9 billion in 1993 to over \$38 billion in 2016. We also recognize that NAFTA is now over 20 years old and improvements to the agreement can be made. We stand ready to work this Administration as it identifies ways to modernize NAFTA while preserving the core benefits of the agreement that have greatly expanded U.S. food and agricultural trade within North America during the past two decades, with ripple effects that have benefitted the U.S. economy and created jobs.

The U.S. food and agriculture sector is heavily dependent on our current access to Mexico and Canada. NAFTA has played a central role in boosting incomes for millions of U.S. farmers, ranchers, and allied manufacturers – and continues to provide important and profitable markets for our nation's rural agriculture-based communities. As the Administration and Congress work together to identify constructive opportunities to modernize NAFTA, it will remain critical to preserve what has worked well in that agreement by building forward from the base of existing market access and tariff provisions. Therefore, it is imperative that we have a USTR and their full team in place to lead these efforts in modernizing NAFTA.

To ensure U.S. trade policy puts all Americans first, including U.S. food and agriculture producers, we believe it is of utmost importance to confirm the USTR as soon as possible. We look forward to working with Mr. Lighthizer and other Trump Administration officials on efforts to develop and implement a U.S. trade policy that continues to promote America's food and agriculture producers and exporters.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Agribusiness Association of Iowa

Almond Alliance of California

American Farm Bureau Federation American Feed Industry Association American Frozen Food Institute American Peanut Council American Peanut Product Manufacturers, Inc. American Potato Trade Alliance American Seed Trade Association American Soybean Association **Archer Daniels Midland Company** Arizona Grain, Inc. **Bartlett Grain Company** Beachner Grain, Inc. Big River Rice and Grain **Biotechnology Innovation Organization Blue Diamond Growers** Bunge California Cherry Export Association California Dairies, Inc. California Fresh Fruit Association California Grain and Feed Association **Campbell Soup Company** Cargill, Incorporated CHS Inc. **Corn Refiners Association** The Cranberry Institute D. E. Bondurant Grain Co. Inc. Degesch America, Inc. Distilled Spirits Council of the United States Elanco Animal Health

Gavilon

Global Cold Chain Alliance (GCCA)

Grain and Feed Association of Illinois

Grocery Manufacturers Association

Hilmar Cheese Company

Hop Growers of America

Independent Bakers Association

Ingredion Incorporated

International Association of Refrigerated Warehouses (IARW)

International Dairy Foods Association

Kansas Grain and Feed Association

Lortscher Agri Service, Inc.

MCT Dairies, Inc.

Mead Johnson Nutrition

Meat Import Council of America

Michigan Agri-Business Association

Michigan Agricultural Commodities, Inc.

Michigan Shippers

Midwest Food Products Association

Milk Specialties Global

Minnesota Grain and Feed Association

Missouri Agribusiness Association

National Association of Egg Farmers

National Association of State Departments of Agriculture

National Association of Wheat Growers

National Barley Growers Association

National Chicken Council

National Confectioners Association

National Corn Growers Association

National Cotton Council

National Council of Farmer Cooperatives

National Grain and Feed Association

National Milk Producers Federation

National Oilseed Processors Association

National Potato Council

National Renderers Association

National Restaurant Association

National Sunflower Association

Nebraska Grain and Feed Association

North American Export Grain Association

North American Meat Institute

North American Millers' Association

North Dakota Grain Dealers Association

Northwest Horticultural Council

Ohio AgriBusiness Association

Ohio Corn & Wheat Growers Association

Oklahoma Grain and Feed Association

Pet Food Institute

Pride Ag Resources

Produce Marketing Association

Rocky Mountain Agribusiness Association

SNAC International

South Dakota Grain and Feed Association

Sweetener Users Association

Tate & Lyle Americas

Team Marketing Alliance

Texas Grain and Feed Association

Trugman Nash LLC

Tyson Foods, Inc.

United Egg Producers

United Fresh Produce Association

USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council

USA Rice

U.S. Apple Association

U.S. Canola Association

U.S. Dairy Export Council

U.S. Dry Bean Council

U.S. Hide, Skin and Leather Association

U.S. Meat Export Federation

US Rice Producers Association

U.S. Wheat Associates

Wheeler Brothers Grain Company, LLC

WineAmerica

Wine Institute

Wisconsin Agri-Business Association