

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 14, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

We request that you address the harmful tariffs imposed by the Government of India on American apples with Prime Minister Modi during his visit to the United States next week. Prime Minister Modi's visit is a tremendous opportunity to re-affirm the special relationship that exists between our two nations, improve U.S. - India trade relations, and address the tariff on U.S. apples. India's current trade restrictions on U.S. apples are harmful to this nationwide industry because they limit access of American growers to an important market, which has led to significant negative impacts on the U.S. domestic market for apples.

In 2019, the Indian government imposed an additional 20 percent tariff on U.S. apples in India, bringing the total tariff to 70 percent on U.S. apples, subsequently eliminating this once valuable export market. Apple growers throughout the U.S. are suffering significant economic losses. For example, Washington state growers have seen exports to India drop over 99 percent, from \$120 million in 2017 to less than \$1 million this season. The loss of the Indian market for Washington state growers alone affects apple growers in Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and other apple growing states because apples that were previously exported then enter the domestic market. This has led to reduced prices impacting growers' bottom lines, at the very time that input costs and supply chain disruptions have left many on the verge of going out of business. Prime Minister Modi's visit is an opportunity to remedy this situation for our apple growers.

India was once the second largest export market for American apples, but the U.S. apple industry has suffered significant losses due to India's retaliatory tariffs on American agricultural products. In retaliation to U.S. Section 232 tariffs on steel and aluminum in 2018, India increased apple tariffs by 20 percentage points for a combined tariff of 70 percent. Since the implementation of these retaliatory tariffs, American growers have lost significant market share at a cost to growers of half a billion dollars in sales.

Apples are also grown in Northern India. India's domestic growers argue that they benefit from the high tariffs, but in fact, U.S. apples have been replaced by apples imported from Iran, Chile, and Turkey, which are not subject to India's elevated tariffs. Notably, these markets don't adhere to the high labor or environmental standards maintained by U.S. growers. This affects apple growers nationwide, including the 36 states where apples are grown commercially.

It is past time to find a solution to stop the damage inflicted on American apple growers, their employees, and communities by these retaliatory tariffs. In February, India announced a 70 percent cut to tariffs on American pecan exports, demonstrating that progress in tariff reduction for U.S. agriculture is possible. We encourage you to build off this progress and help re-open this critical market for U.S. apple growers.

We appreciate your attention to this important issue and ask you to raise our concerns with Prime Minister Modi during his visit to the United States.

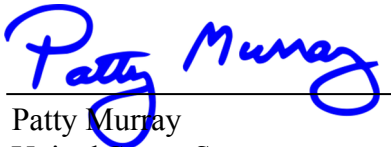
Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell
United States Senate
Chair, Committee on
Commerce, Science,
and Transportation



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senate
Chair, Committee on
Agriculture, Nutrition,
and Forestry



Patty Murray
United States Senate
Chair, Committee on
Appropriations



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senate