

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 25, 2018

The Honorable Pat Roberts
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition and Forestry
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition and Forestry
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Roberts and Ranking Member Stabenow,

As the Senate Farm Bill moves to the Senate floor for consideration, we urge the Committee's strong support for the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) export programs and ask that the Committee increase funding for the Market Access Program (MAP) and the Foreign Market Development Program (FMD). Thousands of family farms and small- to medium-sized agricultural enterprises throughout the country rely on these programs to gain access to international markets and as U.S. trade relations with critical partners continue to intensify, increased funding for MAP and FMD is important now more than ever.

Agricultural exports have long been key drivers of the U.S. economy. According to the USDA Economic Research Service, U.S. exports of food and farm products totaled \$138 billion and supported 1.1 million American jobs in 2017. Despite continued growth, the U.S. agricultural industry has faced increasingly strong international competition to meet the demands of the growing world population. To successfully develop relationships in new foreign markets and maintain existing trade relationships, agricultural producers have relied extensively on MAP and FMD.

Administered by the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, MAP and FMD are cost-share programs that match funds contributed by U.S. agricultural producers. They have a proven track record of helping American agricultural products reach foreign markets, opening up new opportunities and adding billions of dollars to our nation's agricultural industry. An independent study commissioned by the USDA found that from 1977 to 2014, these programs produced an average return on investment of \$28 for every dollar spent and accounted for 15 percent of all U.S. agricultural export revenue. While MAP and FMD have successfully opened the doors to foreign markets for farmers for decades, funding for MAP has not increased since 2006 and funding for FMD has not increased since 2002. As federal support for these programs remains stagnant, foreign competitors are increasing funding for agricultural export programs to grow their international presence. This increased competition, along with trade policies that directly harm U.S. agricultural products, puts our farmers at a disadvantage and at serious risk of losing out in the foreign agricultural marketplace.

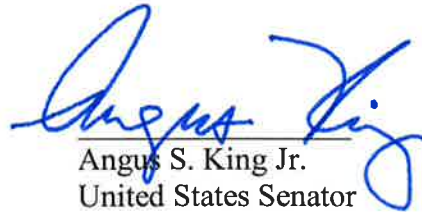
We understand and appreciate that there are tough decisions that need to be made as work continues on the Farm Bill. We were encouraged to see that the Farm Bill passed Committee in a bipartisan fashion, as well as invested over \$500 million in these critical export promotion

programs and avoided any negative structural changes. However, our agriculture industry is facing unprecedented barriers as American farmers seek to export their products. Increased funding for well-established, effective programs like MAP and FMD is what our farmers desperately need.

Sincerely,



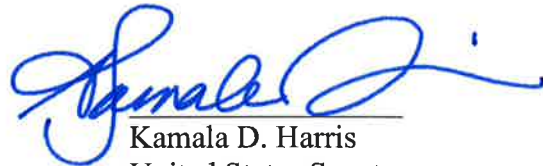
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Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator



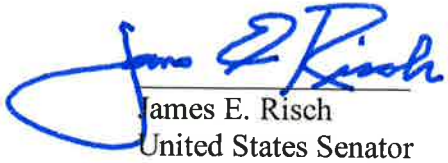
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



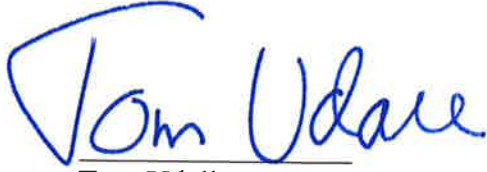
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