

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 23, 2016

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

We write to you regarding the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's (APHIS) Notice of Intent (NOI) to revise pre-market biotechnology regulations, which was published in the *Federal Register* on February 5, 2016.

As proponents of agricultural innovation, we feel strongly that government policies and regulations should consistently promote scientific advancement in food and agricultural production. Science is helping, and will continue to help, farmers and other food producers feed a rapidly growing global population in the face of increasing weather, pest, disease, and environmental challenges.

We appreciate the U.S. Department of Agriculture's historic commitment to scientific discovery and risk-based regulation for products of biotechnology. This commitment has enabled the development and widespread commercial use of many beneficial biotech crops. For innovation like this to continue, APHIS must proceed cautiously and deliberately with any potential re-write of the current biotechnology regulatory structure. It is also essential that APHIS works closely with stakeholders, other biotechnology regulators, and additional relevant parties, such as our trade representatives, to ensure that any revised rules avoid unintended consequences.

Based on our reading of the NOI and feedback from key stakeholders, we recognize items of both commendation and concern with what has been proposed. We are encouraged that APHIS is seeking to use its existing regulatory authority to exempt classes of biotechnology products the agency knows do not present a risk to agriculture, the environment, or consumers. However, we are concerned that APHIS's proposals have created tremendous uncertainty as to what breeding processes and which categories of products will receive pre-market regulatory scrutiny, and to what degree. In addition, we are concerned that a lack of dialogue between our government and our major trading partners could lead to trade disruptions in significant export markets.

This kind of regulatory ambiguity has the potential to stifle the commercialization of new plant breeding innovation that is particularly valuable to specialty crop producers. Congress has invested significant resources in researching pest and disease challenges within the specialty crop sector. Because many of the most serious pests and diseases confronting specialty crops can be mitigated through innovative plant breeding methods, it is incumbent upon APHIS to focus the scope of potential regulatory changes on areas where there is a clear and justified risk. It would be irresponsible to sweep whole classes of plant breeding methods into a pre-market regulatory

structure without scientific and risk-based justification, particularly any methods that have been safely utilized for decades. Doing so would not just hinder innovation in specialty crop production, it would likely prevent scientific breakthroughs that will improve the quality of life and health outcomes for billions of people around the world.

We appreciate your attention to our views and look forward to staying in close contact with the Department as APHIS collects public comments on the NOI and makes decisions related to this sweeping regulatory revision.

Sincerely,



Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress



Kurt Schrader  
Member of Congress



Frank Lucas  
Member of Congress



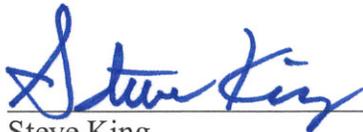
Collin C. Peterson  
Member of Congress



Bob Goodlatte  
Member of Congress



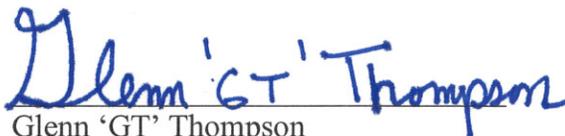
Suzan DelBene  
Member of Congress



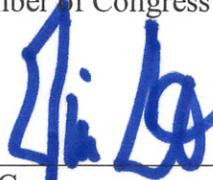
Steve King  
Member of Congress



David Scott  
Member of Congress



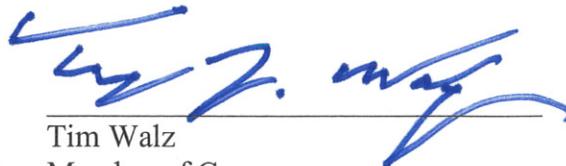
Glenn 'GT' Thompson  
Member of Congress



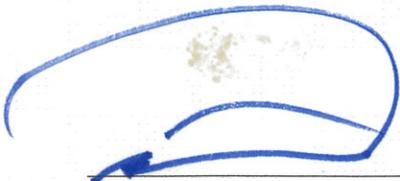
Jim Costa  
Member of Congress



Rick Crawford  
Member of Congress



Tim Walz  
Member of Congress



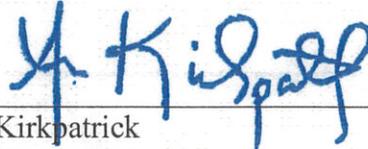
Scott DesJarlais, M.D.  
Member of Congress



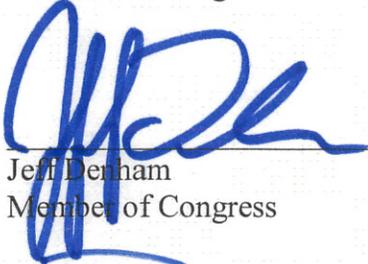
Filemon Vela  
Member of Congress



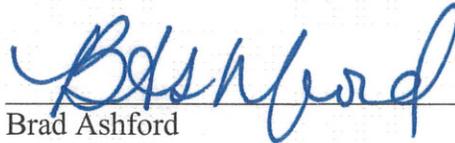
Vicky Hartzler  
Member of Congress



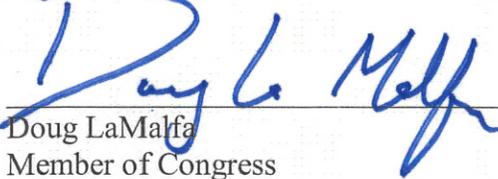
Ann Kirkpatrick  
Member of Congress



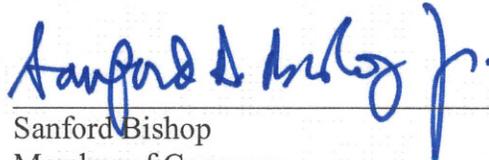
Jeff Denham  
Member of Congress



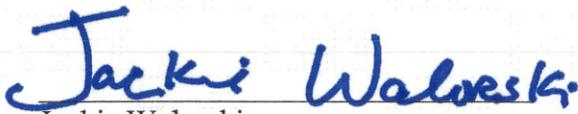
Brad Ashford  
Member of Congress



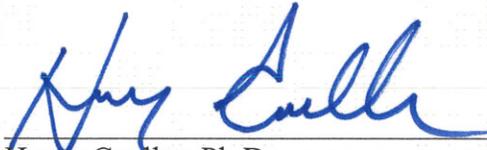
Doug LaMalfa  
Member of Congress



Sanford Bishop  
Member of Congress



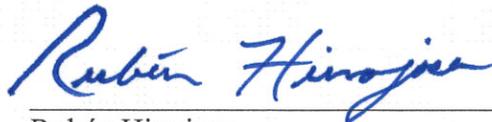
Jackie Walorski  
Member of Congress



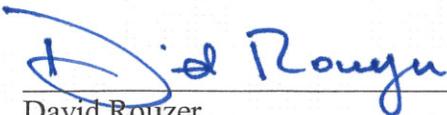
Henry Cuellar, Ph.D.  
Member of Congress



Mike Bost  
Member of Congress



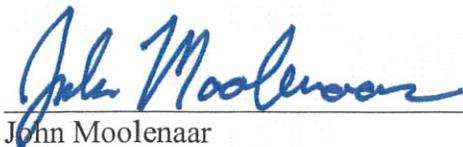
Rubén Hinojosa  
Member of Congress



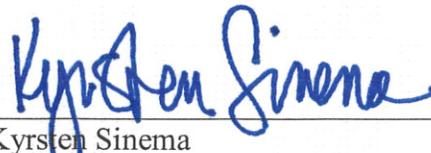
David Rouzer  
Member of Congress



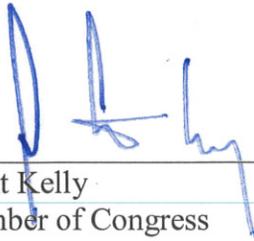
Terri Sewell  
Member of Congress



John Moolenaar  
Member of Congress

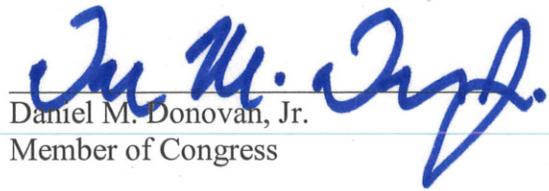


Kyrsten Sinema  
Member of Congress



---

Trent Kelly  
Member of Congress



---

Daniel M. Donovan, Jr.  
Member of Congress



---

Sam Graves  
Member of Congress



---

Lynn Jenkins  
Member of Congress



---

Renee Ellmers  
Member of Congress



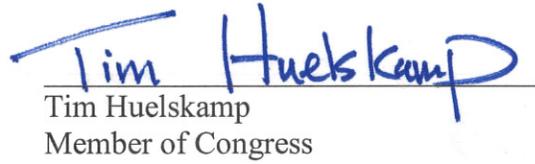
---

Susan Brooks  
Member of Congress



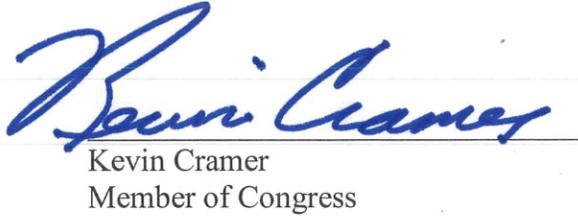
---

Chris Collins  
Member of Congress



---

Tim Huelskamp  
Member of Congress



---

Kevin Cramer  
Member of Congress



---

Martha McSally  
Member of Congress



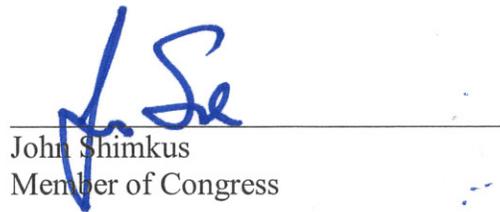
---

David G. Valadao  
Member of Congress



---

Adrian Smith  
Member of Congress



---

John Shimkus  
Member of Congress



---

Cynthia Lummis  
Member of Congress



---

Tim Walberg  
Member of Congress

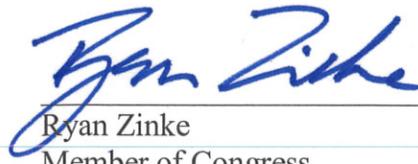


---

Blaine Luetkemeyer  
Member of Congress



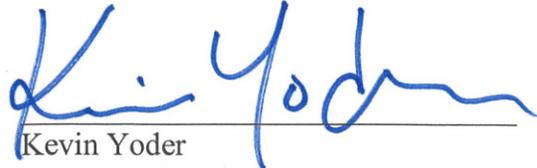
Stephen Fincher  
Member of Congress



Ryan Zinke  
Member of Congress



Rod Blum  
Member of Congress



Kevin Yoder  
Member of Congress



Robert Pittenger  
Member of Congress



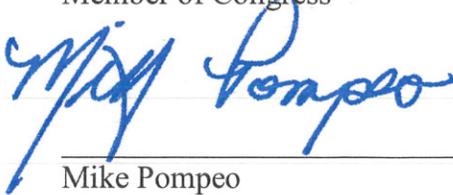
David Schweikert  
Member of Congress



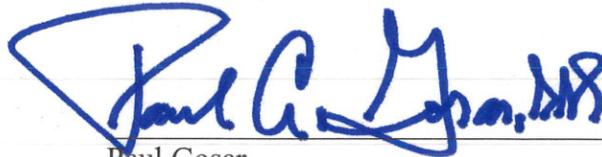
Tom Marino  
Member of Congress



Richard Hudson  
Member of Congress



Mike Pompeo  
Member of Congress



Paul Gosar  
Member of Congress



Luke Messer  
Member of Congress



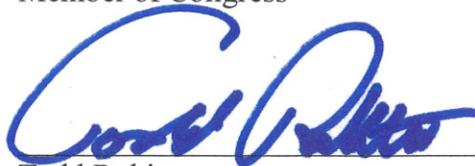
Randy Weber  
Member of Congress



David Young  
Member of Congress



Dan Benishek, M.D.  
Member of Congress



Todd Rokita  
Member of Congress



Austin Scott  
Member of Congress

*Reid Ribble*

Reid Ribble  
Member of Congress

*Bill Foster*

Bill Foster  
Member of Congress

*Ted S. Yoho*

Ted S. Yoho, DVM  
Member of Congress

*Cheri Bustos*

Cheri Bustos  
Member of Congress

*George Holding*

George Holding  
Member of Congress