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Congress of the United States House of Representatives

September 17, 2019

The Honorable Robert Lighthizer
United States Trade Representative
Executive of Office of the President
600 Seventeenth Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20508

Dear Ambassador Lighthizer:

Thank you for all of your hard work as the United States Trade Representative. American farmers very much appreciate your continued support. I write to you today seeking your assistance on a vital trade issue concerning market access of Washington apples in India. For over a decade, Washington apple growers invested heavily to develop the market in India. Washington apples going to India are a true success story of market diversification, but this positive investment is now at risk due to India's Section 232 retaliatory tariff of 20%. When added to the existing Most Favored Nation (MFN) tariff, this amounts to a total of 70%. This sharp increase is truly damaging to the U.S. and Washington state apple markets by virtually locking out U.S. growers

It is my understanding your office is currently in negotiations with India to resolve current trade policies. In your negotiations with Prime Minister Narendra Modi this coming weekend, I urge you to prioritize the immediate removal of Section 232 retaliatory tariffs and obtain a commitment to reduce India's 50% MFN tariff on U.S. apples.

Washington state is the largest apple producing state in the country, totaling \$2.4 billion annually, and our apple growers are shouldering significant economic losses estimated in the hundreds of millions of dollars as a result of various WTO illegal retaliatory actions of India, Mexico, and the People's Republic of China. India has been Washington states' second-largest apple export destination at approximately \$148 million in farmgate sales. Red Delicious apple growers, for example, will be impacted heavily, as 20% or more of all Red Delicious apples harvested were shipped to India from 2017 to 2018. Red Delicious consistently accounts for 48% of all exports by variety. The actions by India to increase tariffs on U.S. apples is a damaging situation that will substantially impact growers, packers, employees, and the thousands of jobs they support throughout Washington state. Additionally, an increased supply of Washington apples due to tariff barriers could cause a ripple effect within the domestic supply chain, negatively affecting other major U.S. apple-growing regions.

I appreciate your efforts to improve market access for American farmers with our international trading partners. I request, on behalf of Washington apple growers, that you continue to work with India to find a positive outcome in our trading relationship, including a reduction to the pre-retaliatory rates as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Dan Newhouse
Member of Congress