

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20510**

August 24, 2018

The Honorable Sonny Perdue  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

We write to request that sweet cherries have equal access to any relief measures the Department of Agriculture provides for agricultural commodities impacted by retaliatory tariffs. While the priority for our growers remains an end to the trade disputes, our cherry growers are estimating they will experience up to \$86 million in damages from trade wars during the 2018 season, and they deserve the same assistance afforded to producers of other agricultural commodities that have been negatively impacted by retaliatory tariffs.

The Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act (15 U.S.C 714) provides the Secretary of Agriculture broad authority to use the Commodity Credit Corporation to carry out almost any program that supports U.S. agriculture, including expanding domestic and international markets, providing disaster relief, supporting research and pest and disease management, and assisting farmers when crop prices drop or revenues decline. In addition, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018 removed language that once limited the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) ability to provide assistance to certain commodities. Therefore, we believe there are no limitations on how the USDA can assist our agricultural producers or what type of agricultural commodities qualify for assistance.

The 2,500 sweet cherry producers grow more cherries in the Pacific Northwest than any other region in the country. Sweet cherries have the shortest growing season of any tree fruit, which typically starts the beginning of May and ends by the middle of August. Sweet cherries are highly perishable, so the cherries must be picked and reach intended markets immediately. Sweet cherries cannot be stored. This harvest time sensitivity and short season creates tremendous pressure for the producer to sell cherries at any available price, even if it means financial losses.

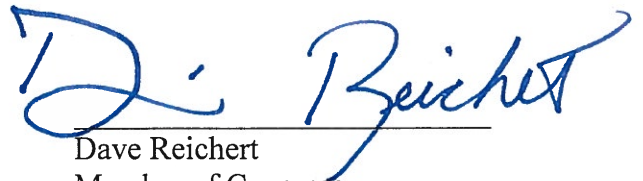
On July 24, 2018, you announced that the USDA will use the Commodity Credit Corporation to provide assistance to agricultural producers that have experienced harm from the retaliatory tariffs that have been imposed on U.S. agricultural exports. You announced relief would come in three forms: a market facilitation program that will provide payments to producers that have and continue to experience damage from the ongoing trade wars, a food purchase and distribution program that will purchase surplus agricultural commodities, and a trade promotion program that

will assist in developing new markets for agricultural products. Because sweet cherries are highly perishable, the season is over and damages from increased tariffs and prices are hitting growers, we urge you to implement the support our cherry growers are requesting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maria Cantwell".

Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dave Reichert".

Dave Reichert  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patty Murray".

Patty Murray  
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dan Newhouse".

Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress