

December 11, 2020

U.S. International Trade Commission
500 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20436

RE: Investigation No. TA-201-77 (Fresh, Chilled, and Frozen Blueberries)

Dear Chairman Kearns and Commissioners:

We write to express our support for the Commission's ongoing Section 201 investigation regarding fresh, chilled, and frozen blueberries. The significant surge of imports of blueberries in recent years, the timing of such imports during U.S. harvest periods, the extremely low pricing of the imports, and the targeting of the U.S. blueberry market by foreign exporters has had a devastating impact on the domestic blueberry industry.

Current prices for blueberries are lower than they have been in years. Thousands of workers across the country have been laid off or not rehired. Scores of blueberry growers have gone out of business causing hardship on family farmers, economic harm to providers of packing and freezing services, and damage to the growers' local communities and tax bases. Grower profits have declined or vanished as prices have plummeted and blueberries have been left on bushes because it is uneconomic to harvest. In short, the effects of the import surge have been and remain devastating to the domestic blueberry industry.

Blueberry imports have surged from a number of countries, especially Chile, Peru, Mexico, Argentina, and Canada, rising nearly 62 percent from 423 million pounds in 2015 to 684 million pounds in 2019. The blueberry market in these countries has been developed to expand exports to the United States rather than for domestic consumption. The large number of countries providing those exports indicates that a global solution is warranted and necessary to provide relief to the domestic blueberry industry.

The United States is already heavily dependent on imports for a variety of important food crops and failure to control the surge of blueberries threatens to sharply reduce the number of U.S. blueberry growers and the volume of U.S. blueberries produced. Not only do these imports threaten domestic businesses and livelihoods, they also expose U.S. consumers to products from countries with poor or inconsistent product safety records.

As the Commission develops the evidentiary record in this case, we believe it will be clear that imports are a substantial cause of serious injury to the domestic blueberry industry. We urge the Commission to promptly make an affirmative determination in this case.

Sincerely,



Austin Scott
Member of Congress



Al Lawson
Member of Congress



Rick W. Allen
Member of Congress



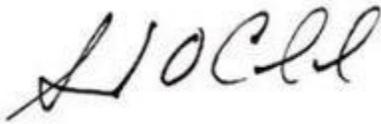
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Member of Congress



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Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
Member of Congress



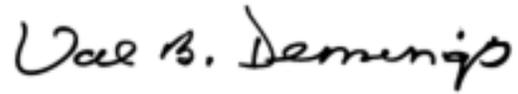
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Member of Congress



Peter DeFazio
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Suzan DelBene
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Val Demings
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John Rutherford
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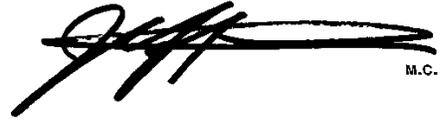
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Ted S. Yoho, D.V.M.
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