

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 1, 2022

Ambassador Rahm Emanuel
U.S. Embassy Tokyo
1-10-5 Akasaka
Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-8420, Japan

Dear Ambassador Emanuel:

Trade with Japan has created economic opportunity for businesses across Washington as the state's second largest export market for food and agricultural goods. However, the recent U.S.-Japan Phase One trade deal failed to fully account for a key bilateral trade flow: while fresh and dried blueberry tariffs were reduced to zero, American frozen blueberries continue to face 6.0 percent or 9.6 percent tariff rates in Japan, depending on sugar content. Remarkably, Japan lifted tariffs on frozen blackberries, raspberries and strawberries, leaving frozen blueberries as an outlier in terms of market access.

These tariffs have made American frozen blueberry exports non-competitive compared to CPTPP countries who can freely trade with Japan in all blueberry products. As a result, American frozen blueberry exports to Japan have been declining relative to those from top competitors like Canada. This inequality has been unaddressed for nearly three years, threatening business relationships between American farmers and Japanese importers. Removal of the tariff on American frozen blueberries is a priority for U.S. blueberry farmers.

In your discussions with Japanese leadership, we urge you to support amending the U.S.-Japan Trade Agreement to ensure U.S. frozen blueberries receive the same market access in Japan as fresh or dried blueberries, as well as other frozen berries, all of which can enter Japan without a tariff. Doing so will allow U.S. farmers to compete on level terms with other blueberry exporting countries and would help save and revitalize market opportunities for U.S. berry farmers.

Sincerely,



Rick Larsen
U.S. Representative
Washington State, Second District



Suzan K. DelBene
U.S. Representative
Washington State, First District

CC: Ambassador Katherine Tai, United States Trade Representative