

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 1, 2022

Ambassador Katherine Tai
United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20508

Dear Ambassador Tai:

During your visit to Northwest Washington last year, you heard from farmers in our districts about the importance of market access in Asia to jobs in the United States. We urge you to continue working with your Japanese counterparts to support U.S. farmers by eliminating Japan's frozen blueberry tariffs.

The 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.

We urge you to pursue an amendment to 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: The Honorable Rahm Emanuel, United States Ambassador to Japan