

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 14, 2017

The Honorable Robert Lighthizer  
United States Trade Representative  
Office of the United States Trade Representative  
600 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Ambassador Lighthizer:

As you work to modernize the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), we write to highlight the importance of agricultural exports to Michigan's economy and emphasize that any renegotiation of NAFTA must not negatively impact Michigan's agricultural sector.

Agriculture is Michigan's second largest industry, and agricultural exports support an estimated 26,000 jobs in our state both on and off the farm. In the two decades since NAFTA entered into force, Michigan agricultural exports to our NAFTA trading partners have grown substantially. Canada and Mexico consistently rank among the top destinations for agricultural products produced in Michigan, including corn, soybeans, dairy, and apples. At a time when many Michigan farmers are struggling with low prices, it is especially critical that any renegotiated agreement does not jeopardize access to these important markets for Michigan farmers, ranchers, and producers.

While market access with our NAFTA partners has generally been beneficial for Michigan farmers, there are still several agricultural trade issues with Canada and Mexico that continue to raise concern and could be addressed in the context of an updated agreement. For example, our dairy farmers have extremely limited access to Canadian markets and are facing a new pricing scheme that could put them at a competitive disadvantage; potato growers have had longstanding market access issues with Mexico; and other commodities like tomatoes have repeatedly faced price disparities and dumping from Mexico. We ask that you work closely with Michigan's farmers and agricultural industry throughout the renegotiation process to address these and any other remaining trade concerns they may have.

During your confirmation, you committed to enhance export opportunities and resolve barriers to Michigan's agricultural exports, while maintaining existing markets for our farmers and ranchers. We appreciate this commitment and thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that any future agreement supports all Michigan farmers, workers, and industries.

Sincerely,



Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator