

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6000
202-224-2035

June 10, 2021

The Honorable Matthew H. Tueller
U.S. Ambassador to Iraq
U.S. Embassy Baghdad
Al-Kindi Street
International Zone
Baghdad, Iraq

Dear Ambassador Tueller,

You have long been an advocate for growing U.S. agriculture exports. We appreciate that you and your staff in the Embassy continue to work tirelessly on behalf of the U.S. rice industry. As you are well aware, Iraq has been a top export market for our rice farmers and high quality U.S. rice has been an integral part of the Iraqi food distribution system for many years.

Unfortunately, the future of our rice exports to Iraq is under threat. Active efforts within Iraq are occurring to move the rice tendering system from the Grain Board of Iraq to the Foodstuff Trade division within the Ministry of Trade. The move will result in transferring purchasing decisions to a subcontractor, which will favor purchases of rice from Asian origins to the disadvantage of U.S. rice.

We understand that a contract with an Iraqi company has already been signed to manage future rice purchases and will effectively nullify the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that has been in place for five years and led to sales of more than 350,000 metric tons (\$180 million) of U.S. rice. While the MOU would still technically be in effect, it is anticipated that little to no U.S. rice would be purchased.

We believe that high level government-to-government intervention is urgently needed to resolve this. **We request that you meet personally with Prime Minister al-Kadhimi to address this development.** In the absence of a transparent tender system and the backing of the MOU that binds our two countries together, we will almost certainly lose this top export market.

Thousands of American farmers and allied businesses rely on the income generated by U.S. rice exports to Iraq and many years of funding have been invested by the U.S. government and private sector to establish the strong relationship that is currently in place.

We thank you and your colleagues for your continued efforts to provide stability to the U.S. rice industry. Your strong and persistent advocacy for American farmers has yielded positive results and we appreciate your engagement to maintain this vital market

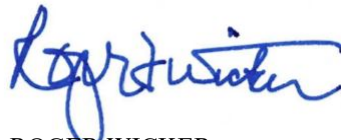
Sincerely,



John Boozman,
Ranking Member,
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry



TOM COTTON
United States Senator



ROGER WICKER
United States Senator



CINDY HYDE-SMITH
United States Senator



BILL CASSIDY, M.D.
United States Senator



JOHN CORNYN
United States Senator



JOSH HAWLEY
United States Senator

cc: Jamison Cruce, USA Rice
Ben Mosely, USA Rice