Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

May 5, 2016

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We respectfully request that you immediately use your authority to make adequate sugar supplies available in the United States at reasonable prices. Because of the federal sugar program and marketplace factors, both supplies and prices are distorted, to the detriment of workers, businesses, consumers – and even some segments of the sugar industry.

Cane sugar refiners are having difficulty in obtaining raw sugar supplies because of unintended consequences stemming from a bilateral agreement between the United States and Mexico. At the same time, the demand for cane sugar has been on the upswing because of growing interest in non-genetically engineered foods. Regardless of how one feels about the overall issue of genetically engineered foods, it appears to be making a difference in the current sugar market, further exacerbating tight raw cane sugar supplies.

As a consequence, prices in the U.S. futures market have skyrocketed and markets have been unstable. Calls for more adequate supplies have come not only from companies that use sugar, but also from U.S. cane refiners, including some of those owned by sugar growers.

As you know, Mr. Secretary, even under the unduly restrictive terms of current sugar law, you have full authority after April 1 to allow an increase in the tariff rate quota (TRQ) for raw sugar. We strongly urge you to act immediately to increase the TRQ by an amount large enough to adequately supply the cane refining sector at reasonable prices. In addition, we would expect that the increase be allocated to all eligible countries able to supply sugar, in order to ensure that the increase enters as raw sugar usable by American cane refineries. Thank you for your prompt response to our request.

Sincerely,

Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator

Joseph R. Pitts
United States Representative

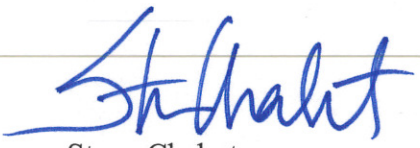
Bill Johnson
United States Representative

Diane Black
United States Representative

Charles W. Dent
United States Representative

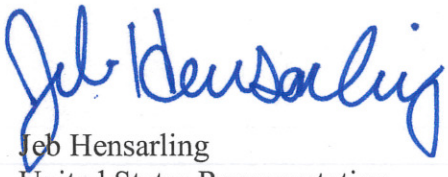
Scott DesJarlais
United States Representative

Eric Swalwell
United States Representative

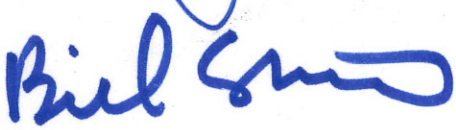


Steve Chabot
United States Representative

Mike Kelly
United States Representative



Jeb Hensarling
United States Representative



Bill Shuster
United States Representative

Earl Blumenauer
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Robert J. Dold
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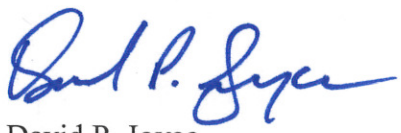
Chris Stewart
United States Representative

Ryan A. Costello
United States Representative

Ann McLane Kuster
United States Representative

Lou Barletta
United States Representative



David P. Joyce
United States Representative

Keith J. Rothfus
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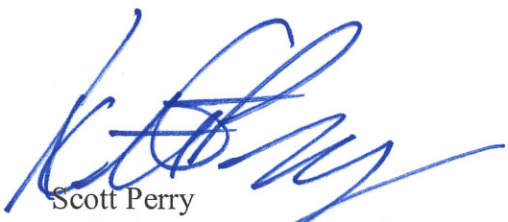
Chris Collins
United States Representative

Steve Womack
United States Representative

Patrick Meehan
United States Representative

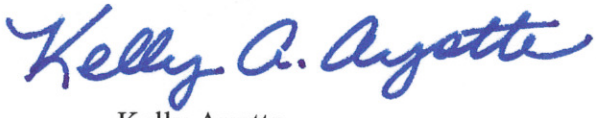
Bobby L. Rush
United States Representative

Charles J. "Chuck" Fleischmann
United States Representative

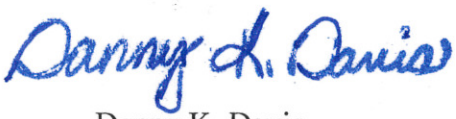


Scott Perry
United States Representative

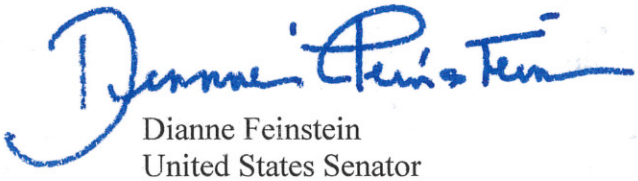
Robert Pittenger
United States Representative



Kelly Ayotte
United States Senator



Danny K. Davis
United States Representative



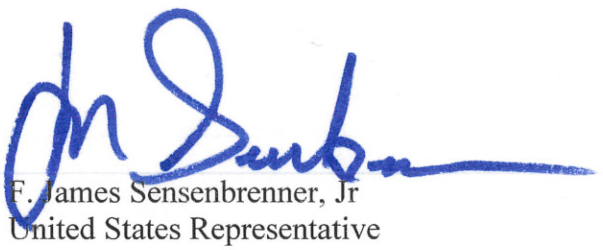
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Robert E. Latta
United States Representative

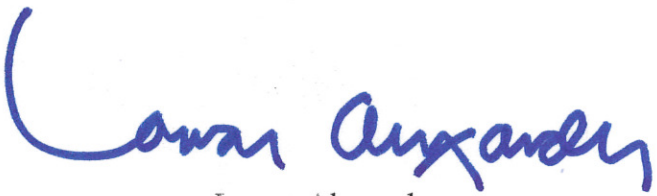
Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

David P. Roe
United States Representative

Chris Coons
United States Senator



F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr
United States Representative



Lamar Alexander
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United States Representative

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United States Senator

Jackie Speier
United States Representative

J. Randy Forbes
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Virginia Foxx
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Joyce Beatty
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Derek Kilmer
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James B. Renacci
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