Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 15, 2009

Barack Obama
The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing in regard to recent actions taken by Mexico to impose more than $2 billion in tariffs on more than 80 U.S. exports to Mexico. The impacts of these tariffs on U.S. agricultural products has been extremely damaging and we strongly urge you to do all you can to resolve this difficult situation as soon as possible.

As you know, following a recent decision to halt funding for a pilot program requiring safety inspections of trucks entering the United States from Mexico, the government of Mexico imposed prohibitive tariffs on a number of U.S. products. The impact on local producers will be devastating should these tariffs remain in place. In 2008, Washington state exported over $87 million worth of goods to Mexico. Twenty-seven California agricultural products are currently on the tariff list, representing approximately $214 million in export sales to Mexico annually. U.S. potato producers would lose more than $17.7 million in sales for the remainder of 2009, increasing to a staggering $40 million loss in 2010. Western and Pacific Northwestern pear, apricot, and cherry growers anticipate a 30 percent drop in pear sales and a 50 percent decline in cherry and apricot sales if the tariffs remain in place through the summer. Grape growers are facing a staggering 45% tariff on their exports, a level which has effectively closed California's annual market worth $58 million and put in jeopardy the livelihoods of 50,000 people who rely upon the grape and tree fruit industry for employment. These losses come at a time when our economy cannot afford more challenges.

Maintaining access to essential export markets, such as Mexico, is imperative for U.S. farm families facing substantial challenges with high input costs, volatile prices, and tightening credit during the current economic challenges. Exports also contribute substantially to our nation's economy and support U.S. jobs. For these reasons, it is crucial that prompt action must be taken to eliminate the tariffs. We appreciate your efforts to address this issue and urge this matter be resolved during your meeting with Mexican President Felipe Calderon on April 16.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

Jim Costa
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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