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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

January 27, 2010

The Honorable Ron Kirk
Ambassador
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20508

Ambassador Kirk,

As a representative from the most trade-dependent state in the nation, I understand the critical role that developing fair trade agreements and expanding foreign markets for U.S. products has in creating jobs and growing our economy. I look forward to working with you as the Administration develops the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TTP) Agreement. I write today to encourage you to carefully consider the priorities of American dairy producers, as you develop parameters and objectives for the Agreement.

American dairy producers support over one million U.S. jobs and generate approximately \$140 billion in economic activity annually. American dairy producers are an integral part of our economy – particularly in rural areas like Central Washington state. Unfortunately, our dairy industry has suffered substantial economic losses in recent years, in part due to a sharp decrease in milk prices coupled with sustained high feed costs.

As you know, the American dairy industry has requested that the U.S.-New Zealand dairy trade be excluded from any TTP Agreement. I understand that similar exclusions have been provided in the past for certain products in other agreements. I believe this request warrants consideration, and I encourage you to review the latest information about the impacts of altering the current status. Ensuring that the TTP Agreement, and any trade agreement, creates a truly level playing field for American agriculture must be a top priority.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. As you move forward on the TTP Agreement, I look forward to working with you to help ensure a bright future for American dairy producers and our national economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Doc Hastings', written over a horizontal line.

Doc Hastings
Member of Congress