

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 27, 2007

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural development,
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jack Kingston, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairman DeLauro and Ranking Member Kingston:

We are writing in support of critical funding for Specialty Crop Block Grants in the FY2008 Agriculture Appropriations Bill. Specialty Crop Block Grants are authorized by the Specialty Crop Competitiveness Act (H.R. 3242, Public Law No: 108-465), as enacted in 2004.

H.R. 3242 was designed to make U.S. specialty crop growers - who produce approximately 50% of the value of all agricultural crops in the U.S. - more competitive in today's global markets. As you know, it is critically important that the U.S. have a strong domestic specialty crop industry capable of producing a nutritious, yet affordable, food supply for our dietary and national security needs. However, in order to achieve this goal, we must invest in initiatives designed to enable our growers to remain competitive in global markets.

Specialty Crop Block Grants are urgently needed to promote investment in research and targeted strategies that will enable U.S. specialty crop growers to remain competitive in global markets. This program provides for block grants to the agriculture departments of the 50 states to support production-related research, commodity promotion, food safety and inspection, removal of foreign government trade barriers, environmental initiatives and other programs that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crop producers.

The specialty crop industry plays an important role in the overall agriculture trade picture, and the Specialty Crop Block Grants can provide the necessary tools needed for the industry to prosper.

Given the difficult challenges facing U.S. specialty crop growers in competing against foreign producers who are often heavily subsidized and minimally regulated, we request your support for \$44.5 million for Specialty Crop Block Grants in FY 2008, as authorized in the Specialty Crop Competitiveness Act of 2004.

We greatly appreciate your support for funding for the Specialty Crop Block Grants in the FY 2006 and FY 2007 Agriculture Appropriations bills, and we urge your strong support for full funding in FY 2008. Thank you for your support of the specialty crop industry and your consideration of this very important request.

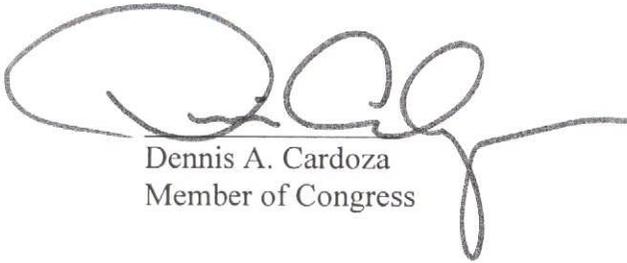
Sincerely,



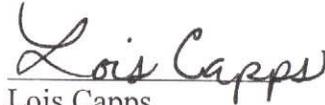
Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Adam Putnam
Member of Congress



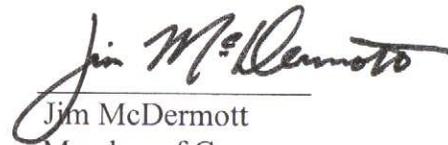
Dennis A. Cardoza
Member of Congress



Lois Capps
Member of Congress



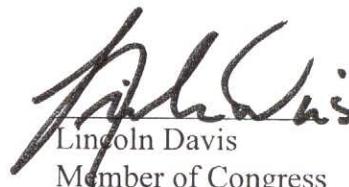
John T. Salazar
Member of Congress



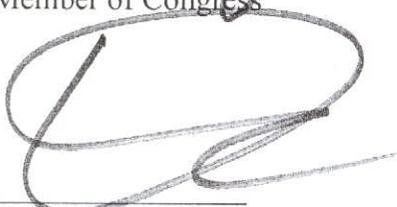
Jim McDermott
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Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress



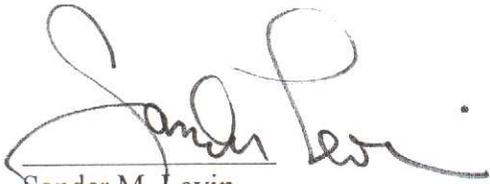
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David Wu
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Tammy Baldwin
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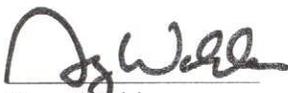
Frank LoBiondo
Member of Congress



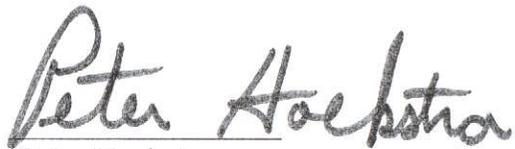
Tom Allen
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Darlene Hooley
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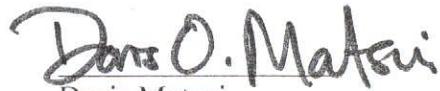
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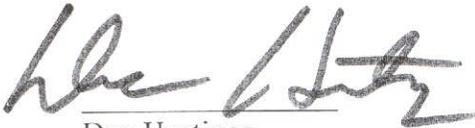
Doris Matsui
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Neil Abercrombie
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Jim Saxton
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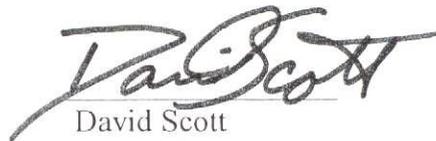
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Cathy McMorris Rodgers
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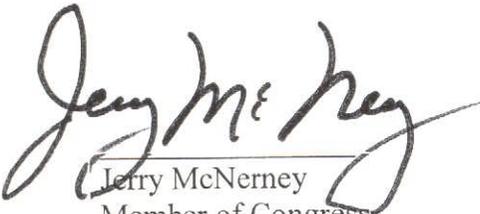
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Mary Bono
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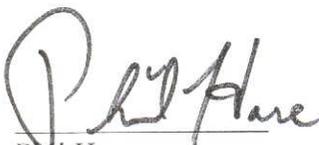
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John Hall
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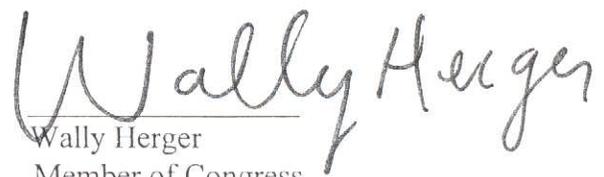
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Jay Inslee
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Joe Courtney
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Wally Herger
Member of Congress



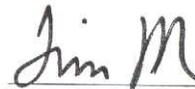
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Jim Costa
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Mazie K. Hirono
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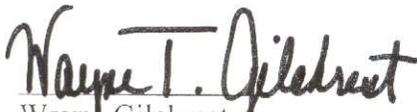
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Alcee Hastings
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Wayne T. Gilchrest
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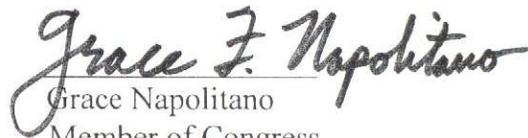
Devin Nunes
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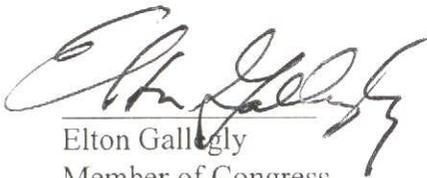
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Mario Diaz-Balart
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Grace Napolitano
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Elton Gallegly
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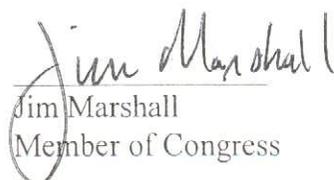
Bart Gordon
Member of Congress



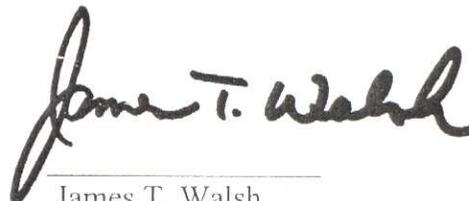
Ruben Hinojosa
Member of Congress



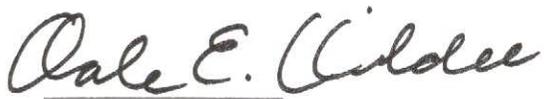
Anna G. Eshoo
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Jim Marshall
Member of Congress



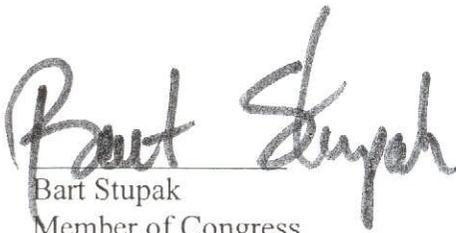
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