

110th Congress  
Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives

April 27, 2007

The Honorable Michael Johanns  
Secretary  
United States Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-0001

Dear Secretary Johanns:

Thank you for your continued support of the domestic asparagus industry through commodity purchases. The purchases have helped alleviate pressure that has resulted from increasing imports from Peru. However, the challenges in the industry from Peru continue to dramatically impact the industry. Therefore, we are writing to request a commodity purchase of asparagus products to assist the damaged industry.

Peru has developed a successful asparagus industry in the last decade largely from the duty-free treatment it gained under the Andean Trade Preferences Act. ATPA was enacted in 1991 to assist with drug suppression efforts in the Andean region. In reviewing the act, the Government Accountability Office has on several occasions reported that asparagus production in the United States has been displaced by duty-free imports from Peru and will continue to experience displacement.

The asparagus industry is diligently working to expand fresh market opportunities and to develop new consumer-friendly processed products. In addition, Michigan, Washington and California have created a new alliance titled the National Asparagus Council to work more closely in solving the problems faced by the asparagus industry. However, the industry still contains excess productive capacity due to increased quantities of imports. As the industry works through its transition, a need for the Department of Agriculture to purchase asparagus products continues to exist. *For this reason we are requesting that the Department of Agriculture make a bonus commodity purchase of asparagus products - including 2 million pounds of canned cut and tips and 2 million pounds of frozen cut and tips.*

We look forward to working with you to ensure that the department's commodity purchases serve the needs of our nutritional programs, as well as assist America's farmers by reducing excess supplies. Your willingness to purchase domestic asparagus at this critical time would be greatly appreciated.

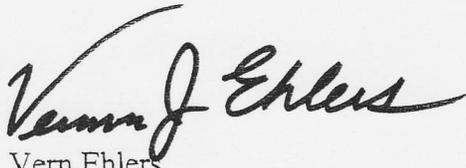
Sincerely,



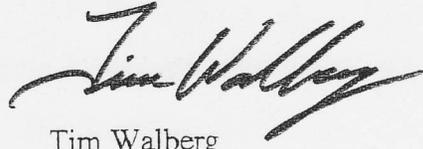
Pete Hoekstra  
Member of Congress



Doc Hastings  
Member of Congress



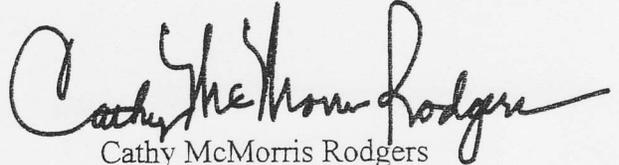
Vern Ehlers  
Member of Congress



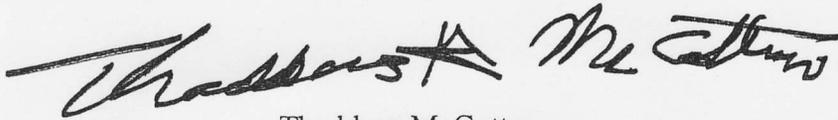
Tim Walberg  
Member of Congress



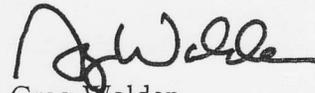
Fred Upton  
Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Member of Congress



Thaddeus McCotter  
Member of Congress



Greg Walden  
Member of Congress

cc: Under Secretary Bruce Knight, Marketing and Regulatory Programs  
Administrator Lloyd Day, Agriculture Marketing Service