

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515

May 5, 2009

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary of Agriculture  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
14<sup>th</sup> Street and Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

We are writing to urge you to direct the Agriculture Marketing Service to make a bonus purchase of at least one million boxes of fresh apples for the National School Lunch Program and other domestic nutrition programs before the 2009 season begins.

A bumper crop in 2008, coupled with reduced demand due to the economic downturn, has created a record inventory of fresh apples leading into the new season. If a purchase is not made, this situation could significantly weaken the economic health of the entire U.S. apple industry.

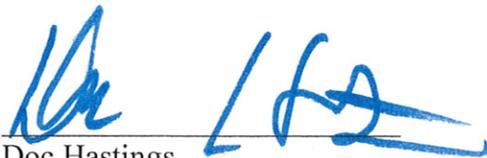
According to the U.S. Apple Association, the April 1 fresh apple holdings are 33 percent above last year's number and 29 percent above the five year average. Many varieties of apples are currently selling below the "break even" point for growers and market experts predict prices will continue to decline unless the stocks are significantly reduced.

As you know, the Section 32 program was specifically created to address situations like this. The U.S. apple industry rarely asks for government assistance, and has not requested a bonus purchase since 2003. However, it is critical that these surpluses are cleared before harvest begins in July.

Apples are a popular and nutritious option for both children and adults. We encourage you to take advantage of this market surplus by purchasing at least one million boxes of fresh apples for federal nutrition programs.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with you on this matter.

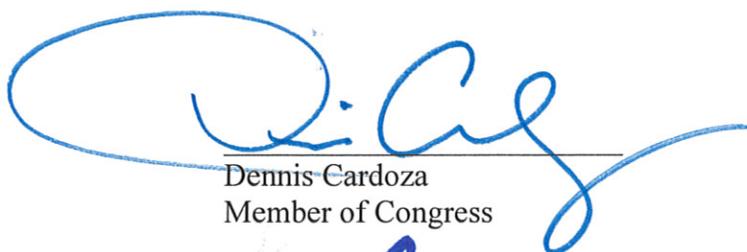
Sincerely,



Doc Hastings  
Member of Congress

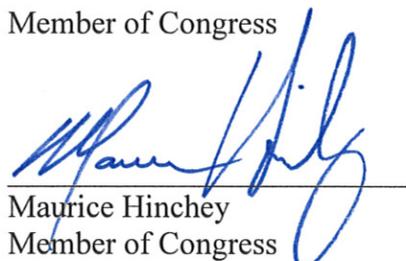


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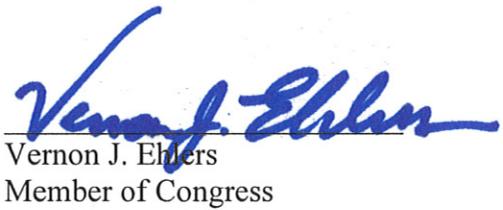
  
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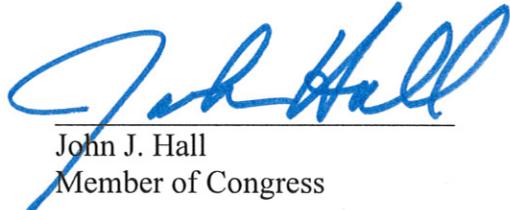
  
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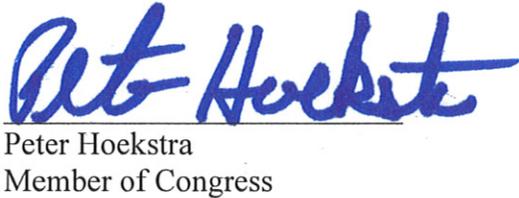
  
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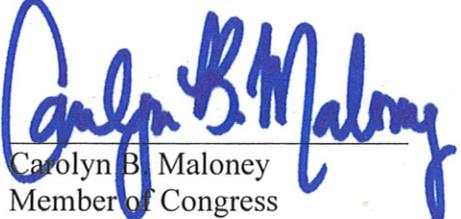
  
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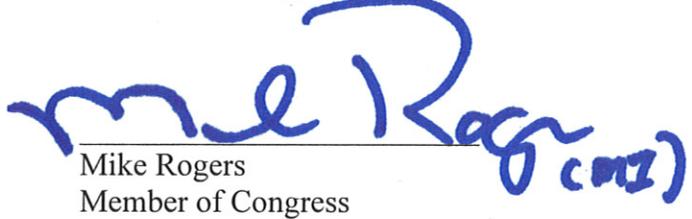
  
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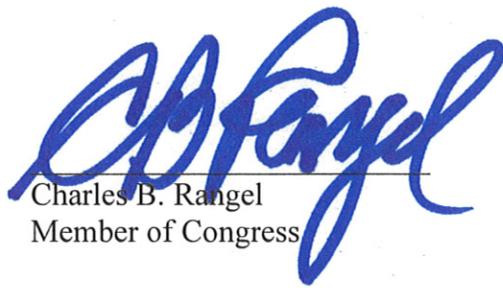
  
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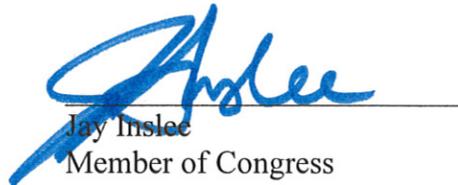
  
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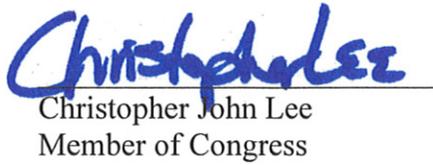
  
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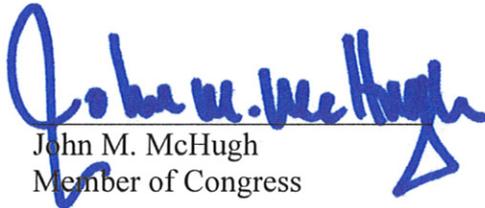
  
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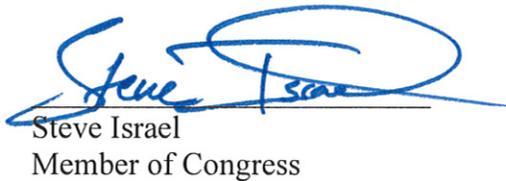
  
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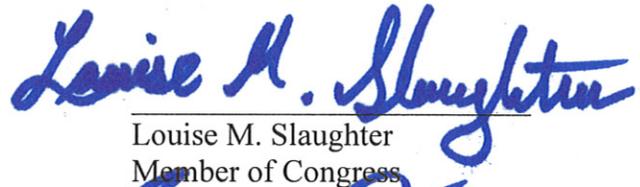
  
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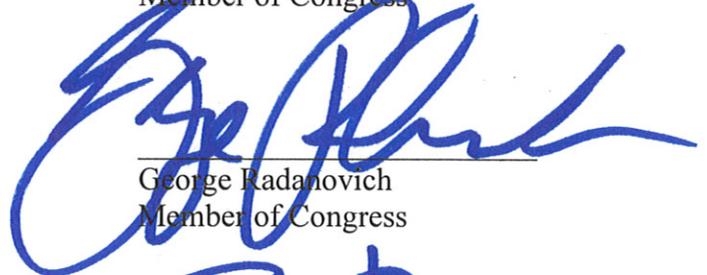
  
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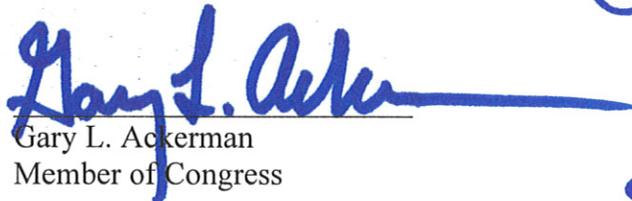
  
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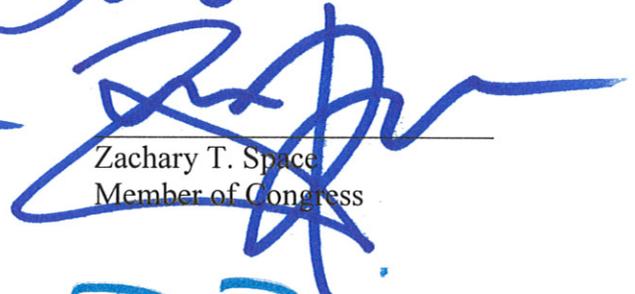
  
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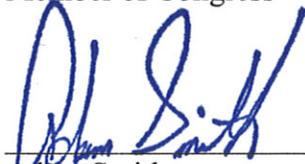
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