

**DOC HASTINGS**  
4TH DISTRICT, WASHINGTON

**COMMITTEE ON  
NATURAL RESOURCES**  
RANKING REPUBLICAN MEMBER



1203 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-5816

2715 SAINT ANDREWS LOOP, SUITE D  
PASCO, WA 99301  
(509) 543-9396

105 SOUTH 3RD STREET, SUITE 107  
YAKIMA, WA 98901  
(509) 452-3243

[www.hastings.house.gov](http://www.hastings.house.gov)

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

September 30, 2009

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

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

As the representatives of asparagus-producing regions, we write to encourage the Department to start signup for the Asparagus Market Loss Program created by the 2008 Farm Bill.

As you know, the Andean Trade Preferences Act (ATPA) included a provision to extend duty-free access to the U.S. market for Peruvian asparagus growers. A subsequent spike in imports has severely affected the American asparagus industry. U.S. asparagus acreage has decreased from 90,000 acres in 1990 to less than 49,000 acres in 2006, and farmers have been forced to lower their prices by as much as 34 percent in a single year. This has translated into the closure of canneries and increased economic stress in the rural communities we represent.

Recognizing the devastating impact on the asparagus industry, Congress created the Asparagus Market Loss program to help compensate growers for their losses. We are concerned that more than a year after the Farm Bill was signed into law, regulations have not been drafted to enable these funds to be dispersed. We recognize that the Department of Agriculture was tasked with writing regulations for many new programs created by the Farm Bill, however, asparagus growers in our districts are in urgent need of the relief this program was created to provide. We respectfully request that you move forward with program regulations and signup for the Asparagus Market Loss Program without further delay.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Doc Hastings".

Doc Hastings  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Pete Hoekstra".

Pete Hoekstra  
Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Member of Congress



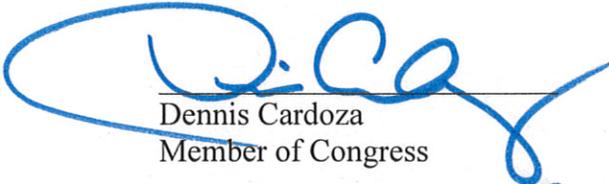
Candice Miller  
Member of Congress



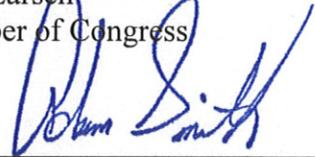
Jay Inslee  
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress



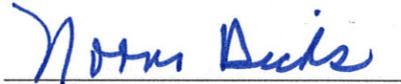
Dennis Cardoza  
Member of Congress



Adam Smith  
Member of Congress



Fred Upton  
Member of Congress



Norm Dicks  
Member of Congress



Brian Baird  
Member of Congress