

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 12, 2010

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

As representatives of potato-producing districts, we write to request a meeting with you to discuss the options for expanding U.S. market access for fresh potatoes to Mexico. As you may know, the Mexican government continues to resist providing full access to the Mexican market for U.S. fresh potatoes in spite of a signed agreement in 2003 to address this issue.

During the recent State of the Union Address, we were pleased to hear President Obama commit the Administration to a renewed effort to expand U.S. exports. Agricultural exports are a bright spot in our nation's trade balance with other nations. A renewed effort to expand farm exports will be good for agriculture and for our nation.

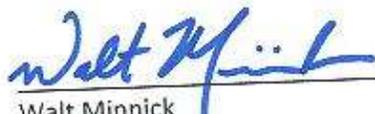
Part of the effort to expand farm exports must be to contest unfair market barriers erected by our trading partners, and to place our growers and processors on an equal playing field. Under the limited access currently allowed by Mexico to the border region, fresh potato growers in the U. S. are exporting nearly \$30 million of fresh potatoes yearly. Conservative estimates of the market potential resulting from full access for fresh potatoes to Mexico's 130 million people is well in excess of \$150 million. Mexico's current policy limiting access for fresh potatoes is not based on science. We respectfully request a meeting with you on this urgent issue at your earliest convenience to review the current situation and to discuss the best options for achieving fair trade with Mexico on this issue. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


John T. Salazar
Member of Congress

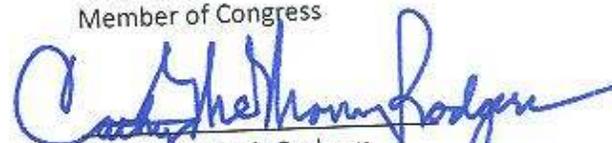

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