



National Association of State Departments of Agriculture

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May 19, 2015

The Honorable Michael Conaway
Chairman, House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Collin Peterson
Ranking Member, House Committee on Agriculture
1010 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Conaway and Ranking Member Peterson:

In light of this week's decision by the World Trade Organization (WTO) that found the current mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) regulations are in violation of the United States' international trade obligations, we urge Congress to quickly act in order to avoid retaliatory measures.

The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) represents the Commissioners, Secretaries, and Directors of the state departments of agriculture in all fifty states and four U.S. territories. State departments of agriculture are responsible for a wide range of programs including food safety, combating the spread of animal and plant diseases, and fostering the economic vitality of our rural communities. Promoting their state's agricultural products and working to enhance export opportunities are also key responsibilities of NASDA members.

NASDA believes there is value in policy that allows for differentiation of products by providing consumers with COOL information within the U.S. retail food supply. However, it is imperative that COOL policy be implemented in a manner that ensures the U. S. is able to maintain its obligations under negotiated international trade agreements and avoid retaliatory trade actions against U.S. agricultural products.

Now that the WTO has—for the fourth and final time—found current U.S. COOL regulations to be in violation of WTO rules, Canada and Mexico will undoubtedly pursue retaliatory measures that will dramatically impact U.S. agricultural producers and other segments of the economy. The impacts of these retaliatory measures will be significant, likely reaching into the billions of dollars.

NASDA urges you to address this issue in order to ensure U.S. agricultural producers are able to access two of their most important export markets without the threat of retaliatory measures. We look forward to working with you on this very important issue. Please feel free to contact Nathan Bowen on NASDA's staff if we can be of any assistance to you or your staff on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara P. Glenn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Barbara P. Glenn, Ph.D.

Chief Executive Officer

NASDA