



May 19, 2015

Honorable K. Michael Conaway
Chairman
Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Collin Peterson
Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Conaway, Ranking Member Peterson and Members of the House Committee on Agriculture:

The National Pork Producers Council, an association of 43 state pork organizations that represents the interests in Washington, D.C., of America's 68,000 pork producers, strongly supports H.R. 2393, legislation to amend the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 to repeal country of origin labeling requirements for beef, pork and poultry.

As you are aware, the World Trade Organization yesterday rejected an appeal by the United States of the international trade body's October 2014 ruling that the U.S. Country-Of-Origin Labeling (COOL) law discriminates against Canadian cattle and pigs and Mexican cattle. That decision paves the way for Canada and Mexico to place tariffs on U.S. imports.

The two countries are expected in the coming days to request authorization from the WTO to retaliate against a host of U.S. products, including pork, beef and many non-agricultural goods. Canada and Mexico are expected to claim billions of dollars in damages from COOL, and the WTO likely will authorize a high level of retaliation sometime this summer.

We must avoid retaliation from our No. 1 and No. 3 export markets, and quick passage of H.R. 2393, followed by immediate action in the Senate, will ensure that U.S. jobs and the American economy will not suffer the negative effects of tariffs.

The United States is close to finalizing one of the biggest free trade agreements ever negotiated in the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and in those trade talks we are demanding that the 11 TPP countries with which we are negotiating live up to international rules that prohibit non-tariff barriers to trade. If we demand that of other nations, shouldn't the United States abide by the same rules?

The U.S. pork industry, which supports 540,000 mostly rural jobs, is very dependent on trade. Last year, we exported almost \$6.7 billion of pork, including about \$2.5 billion to Canada and Mexico, which added nearly \$63 to the price of each hog marketed.

We can't afford to have our products restricted, through tariffs, to two of our most important markets.

NPPC urges all members of the Committee and the entire House of Representatives to support H.R. 2393, and we thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ron Prestage". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "R" and "P".

Dr. Ron Prestage, President
National Pork Producers Council