

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

September 11, 2019

The Honorable Robert E. Lighthizer  
United States Trade Representative  
600 17<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20508

Dear Ambassador Lighthizer:

We are contacting you to express our concern about how apple growers in the State of Maine are suffering due to the ongoing trade retaliation and disruptions.

Maine's apple producers are facing serious difficulties. According to the U.S. Apple Association, fresh exports of the 2018 U.S. apple crop experienced a 27 percent decrease overall from the 2017 crop, and the value of apple exports fell by 22 percent from \$1.1 billion to \$854 million. As larger producers in the western U.S. are no longer able to export as much product, the domestic market becomes flooded. This has created serious challenges for smaller growers in New England who rely predominantly on the domestic market to sell their product. In Maine, many of the producers are small, multi-generational family businesses who may not be able to withstand these pressures if the trade disputes continue. For example, the ninth-generation Ricker Hill Orchard in Turner, Maine, which has been growing apples since 1803, now faces an uncertain future if it is not able to sell its crop on the domestic market.

The agreement reached with Mexico in May 2019 to remove a 20 percent tariff on apple exports was a positive development. Mexico is the top destination for U.S. apples, and it is important that growers are able to continue to access this market. Unfortunately, significant tariffs remain on apple exports to India and China. The Administration's efforts to negotiate better pacts for the American people and address valid concerns with our trading partners are important. However, as the trade negotiations occur, the Administration needs to ensure that the actions we take do not hurt our domestic producers. India is our second largest export market for apples, and China has been a fast growing destination since full market access was achieved in 2015. We ask that any final agreements with India and China involve eliminating the tariffs on apples, thereby allowing producers across the country to sell their product in a free and open market.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Should there be any questions, please have your staff contact [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins  
United States Senator



Jared Golden  
Member of Congress