

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

September 11, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
U.S. Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

We write to request that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) consider providing, and help identify existing, assistance to Maine apple producers through the Agricultural Trade Promotion or any other department trade relief programs.

Maine apple growers are suffering from trade retaliation and disruptions. As larger apple producer in the western U.S. are no longer able to export as much product to markets such as China and India, those apples are sent to the eastern U.S., flooding the domestic market. This is especially harmful for smaller growers like those in Maine who rely predominantly on the domestic market for their sales.

Since growers in New England are expecting an above average apple crop in 2019, we are very concerned about the effects this have on the 84 apple growers in the state of Maine. Many of these producers are small, multi-generational family businesses. 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.

Apple growers represent an important part of Maine's economy and agricultural heritage. As our small growers weather the storms of trade disruptions, we must ensure that they have the necessary resources and support. We request your immediate consideration of this request, in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations, and ask that you please have your staff contact [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Jared Golden
Member of Congress