

CHRISTOPHER A. COONS
DELAWARE

WWW.COONS.SENATE.GOV

127A RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
(202) 224-5042

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0805

February 22, 2019

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ENTREPRENEURSHIP COMMITTEE
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The Honorable Robert E. Lighthizer
United States Trade Representative
600 17th St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Ambassador Lighthizer:

We write regarding your current negotiations with China ahead of President Trump's deadline to reach a new trade agreement before March 1. We believe that a trade agreement with China must provide for strong and lasting structural changes in order to end the unfair trade practices that have disproportionately hurt the U.S. economy and American workers. Without effective language addressing issues such as Chinese intellectual property theft, forced technology transfer, unfair subsidies for Chinese state-owned enterprises, and barriers to U.S. agriculture products, China will continue to take advantage of our free and open markets. Agriculture is of particular importance to our states' economies, and we urge you to use this opportunity to support America's farmers by securing duty-free access for U.S. agricultural products and lifting the Chinese ban on U.S. poultry products.

China is a critical export market for America's farmers. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, China was the largest export market for U.S. agricultural products, with farm and food exports totaling \$22 billion¹. Unfortunately, China's retaliatory tariffs have resulted in reduced agricultural exports, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture projects that agricultural exports to China could decrease to \$9 billion in FY 2019².

For farmers in our states who depend on robust foreign trade, your negotiations with China represent an opportunity to reverse these market losses and reopen the Chinese market to U.S. poultry. In 2015, China imposed a ban on U.S. poultry products due to an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in the United States. While we were encouraged by China's decision to remove anti-dumping and anti-subsidy duties on U.S. broiler chickens in February 2018, the market remains closed to U.S. poultry products because of the ban. Poultry exports to China peaked in 2008, with an export value of \$722 million³. Reopening this export market would strengthen the economies of our rural communities, supporting hundreds of thousands of workers who are employed by the poultry industry.

In his State of the Union address on February 5, 2019, President Trump committed to ensuring that a new trade agreement with China will "include real, structural change to end unfair trade practices." We share this goal, and we are hopeful that you will also work to support our

¹ <https://www.fas.usda.gov/data/agricultural-exports-finish-strong-fy-2017>

² <https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/90902/aes-106.pdf?v=3468.1>

³ <https://www.nationalchickencouncil.org/ncc-statement-us-china-preliminary-trade-agreement-beef-poultry/>

agricultural industries and secure open and enforceable access to the Chinese market for U.S. poultry.

Sincerely,



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Johnny Isakson
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



John Boozman
United States Senator



Doug Jones
United States Senator



Tom Cotton
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

CC: The Honorable Sonny Perdue, Secretary of Agriculture