

## **U.S. Food and Agriculture Dialogue for Trade**

February 8, 2018

The Honorable Robert E. Lighthizer  
600 17<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Ambassador Lighthizer:

The Asia-Pacific Market Working Group of the U.S. Food and Agriculture Dialogue for Trade welcomes President Trump's recent address at the World Economic Forum, in which he stated that the "United States is prepared to negotiate mutually beneficial, bilateral trade agreements with all countries...includ[ing] the countries within TPP [Trans Pacific Partnership]" and that the United States "would consider negotiating with the rest [of the TPP countries] either individually or perhaps as a group if it is in the interests of all."

The U.S. Food and Agriculture Dialogue for Trade is comprised of over 100 organizations representing America's farmers, ranchers, processors, and agri-businesses. As a leading sector for manufacturing in the United States, the ability to access one of the fastest growing regions in the world will yield measurable benefits to U.S. job-creators, American consumers and workers.

We understand that the eleven other TPP signatories will sign the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) in March and begin implementing it in the ensuing months. Once this happens, our sector will be placed at a substantial disadvantage as other countries gain entry into these markets at substantially lower tariffs and preferential terms. Given the downturn in U.S. farm prices and profitability that already is hurting rural America, the timing could not be worse. American food and agricultural producers and companies are facing significant barriers in these markets that could be addressed with the improved rules and higher standards through reengagement with the TPP countries.

We believe there are compelling reasons to ensure that American farmers, ranchers, agribusinesses, retailers, workers and consumers benefit from the opportunities that exist in the Asia-Pacific region. We would welcome sharing our specific ideas and supporting your Administration's efforts for reengaging with TPP countries in a manner that results in concrete gains for the United States.

Sincerely,

**Asia-Pacific Market Working Group of the U.S. Food and Agriculture Dialogue for Trade**

cc:

The Honorable Sonny Perdue, Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Page Two  
February 8, 2018

The Honorable Wilbur Ross, Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce  
The Honorable Pat Roberts, Chairman, Senate Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry Committee  
The Honorable Debbie Stabenow, Ranking Member, Senate Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry  
and Senate Finance Committees  
The Honorable Orrin Hatch, Chairman, Senate Finance Committee  
The Honorable Michael Conaway, Chairman, House Agriculture Committee  
The Honorable Collin C. Peterson, Ranking Member, House Agriculture Committee  
The Honorable Kevin Brady, Chairman, House Ways & Means Committee  
The Honorable Richard Neal, Ranking Member, House Ways & Means Committee  
Mr. Gary Cohn, Director, National Economic Council