

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 12, 2020

The Honorable Robert E. Lighthizer
United States Trade Representative
600 17th St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20508

Dear Ambassador Lighthizer:

We write today to urge you to consider the broad impacts of a new seasonal trade remedy on Mexican tomato imports. This trade remedy would affect Arizona's economy, the U.S. agribusiness supply chain, and consumers all across the country who enjoy a diverse selection of tomatoes at low prices. Upcoming virtual hearings on August 13th and 20th to consider trade remedies in response to allegedly distortionary Mexican trade policies risk undermining the spirit of free trade championed by the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) and further addressed by the adoption of a new Tomato Suspension Agreement in 2019.

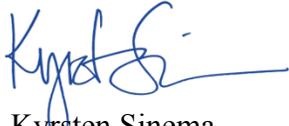
As you are aware a "seasonality" provision, whereby certain Mexican tomatoes could be subjected to additional dumping duties at various times throughout the year, would affect jobs and economic development in Arizona. A University of Arizona study shows that Mexican tomato imports support 33,000 U.S. jobs. Agribusiness supply chains derived from these imported tomatoes account for nearly \$3 billion in U.S. gross domestic product.

Consumers in the U.S. currently enjoy the lowest food costs in the world, with just 6.4 percent of U.S. income going toward food. Some fresh fruits and vegetables, like tomatoes, however, are simply not available in sufficient volume from the U.S. in certain months. U.S. companies have found significant value in working with farms in Mexico to produce and export products that contribute to healthful eating habits for U.S. consumers. A seasonal trade remedy would choke off a critical supply of imported tomatoes, resulting in higher prices for U.S. consumers while reducing availability, selection, and quality in supermarket aisles. This would be particularly harmful at a time when our nation continues to combat the COVID-19 crisis and when millions of Americans are struggling to put food on the table.

As supporters of free, fair, and reciprocal trade between the United States and its trading partners around the globe, we strongly oppose any new agriculture seasonality provision targeting Mexican tomato imports. Such a provision would run counter to consumer preferences, undermine the spirit and benefits of free trade, risk reciprocal or retaliatory actions from our trade partners, and harm U.S. industries in order to artificially support a small segment of regional growers' interests. We encourage the Administration to consider these positions during the upcoming August hearings.

Thank you very much for your attention to this important issue. We look forward to your response and appreciate your consideration of this request in accordance with all existing agency rules, regulations, and ethical guidelines.

Sincerely,



Kyrsten Sinema
U.S. Senator



Martha McSally
U.S. Senator



Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress



Greg Stanton
Member of Congress



Debbie Lesko
Member of Congress



Andy Biggs
Member of Congress



David Schweikert
Member of Congress



Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



Raúl Grijalva
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Sonny Perdue, Secretary of Agriculture
The Honorable Wilbur Ross, Secretary of Commerce