

United States Senate

August 7, 2020

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

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

We write today to request the removal of the Section 301 tariffs that were placed on food and beverage products from the European Union in October 2019 in relation to the World Trade Organization Large Civil Aircraft dispute.

Restaurants, retailers, grocers, importers and distributors, many of which are small, locally-owned businesses, have experienced severe economic hardship due to the increased cost of goods. We appreciated the Administration's decision earlier this year to not increase the tariffs; however, the negative economic costs of the remaining 25 percent tariffs continue and the COVID-19 pandemic has only compounded the harm. Demand for these goods has declined, leaving importers and distributors with months' worth of product, much of it perishable, in storage and in transit with no clear end date for the COVID-19 pandemic. Consumers are wary of increased prices during this uncertain time and the tariffs create an additional burden. Furthermore, tariffs on these products may inflict additional harm on U.S. exports of agricultural products that sustain these industries. Similarly, the EU is imposing retaliatory tariffs on U.S. food and beverage products and threatening to impose more tariffs in its parallel case against U.S. in the WTO Large Civil Aircraft Dispute.

We respect the need for a response to the unfair subsidies provided by the European Union (EU) to Airbus. Though we understand the intricacies of the ongoing trade negotiations with the European Union, the stress that has been placed on businesses in our states is significant. These industries have been hit hard by the pandemic and we encourage you to avoid subjecting workers and businesses that depend on these products from further economic harm, and urge the EU to simultaneously remove its tariffs, and agree not to impose more tariffs, on U.S. food and drink products.

Thank you for your continued attention to this urgent matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our offices.

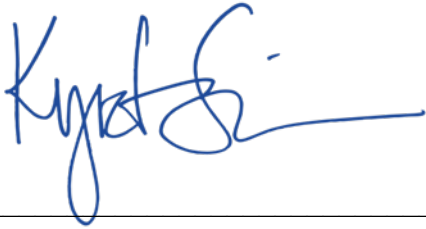
Sincerely,



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator



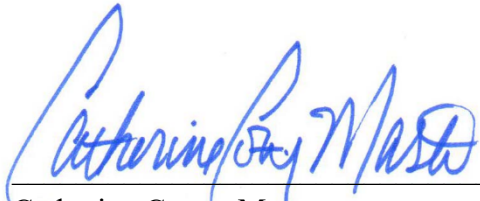
Cory Gardner
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



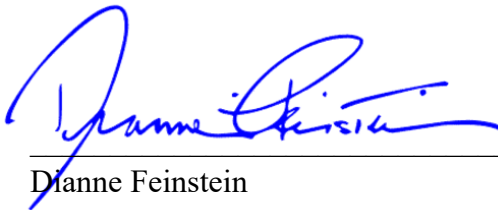
John Barrasso, M.D.
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator

/s/ Thom Tillis

Thom Tillis
United States Senator



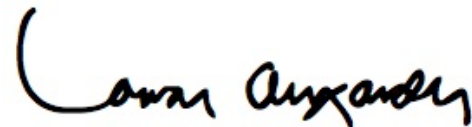
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



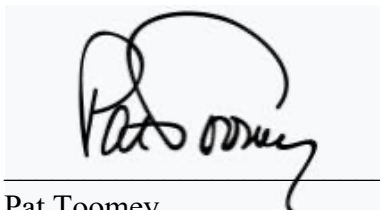
Martha McSally
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Lamar Alexander
United States Senator



Pat Toomey
United States Senator