Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 19, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

We appreciate your administration's efforts, particularly those of Secretary Vilsack and Ambassador Tai, to engage with the Mexican government on the topic of agricultural innovation and trade. However, policies and processes remain in place in Mexico which are major obstacles to U.S. agricultural exports, causing uncertainty and other disruptions in the agricultural supply chain here in the United States. We strongly urge you to prioritize U.S. agricultural biotechnology competitiveness as you engage with the Mexican government, and that your administration use the enforcement tools provided to you in the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) to secure fair treatment for American agricultural producers and rural communities.

As you know, USMCA contains state-of-the-art agricultural biotechnology and updated sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) provisions with enforceable commitments. The agreement, in both letter and spirit, confirms the importance of encouraging agricultural innovation and facilitating trade in this sector. Specifically, USMCA contains obligations to encourage the efficient processing of biotechnology approvals and requires each Party to maintain transparent regulatory systems to prevent disruptions to trade in agricultural biotechnology products. USMCA also established a committee to facilitate regulatory consistency on current and emerging biotechnologies.

The U.S. is at the forefront of developing and deploying innovative plant biotechnologies, which can reduce the need for water and increase drought tolerance; capture carbon and sequester it in the soil; and make produce resistant to bruising and browning, decreasing food waste. With over 90 percent of corn, soybean, and cotton acres produced with biotechnology seeds, the U.S. is the world's largest producer of biotechnology crops, many of which are grown for export. This includes export to Mexico, the U.S.'s third-largest agricultural trading partner, which imported $18.3 billion in U.S. agricultural and related products in 2020. As a result, Mexican agricultural biotechnology measures have a significant impact on our agricultural sector.

Recent actions by the Mexican government blatantly defy the biotechnology and SPS provisions of the USMCA and stand to greatly disrupt U.S. agricultural exports and the rural communities we represent. Since 2018, the Government of Mexico has brought biotechnology permit approvals to a standstill, making Mexico's regulatory system, which used to be largely

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approvals to a standstill, making Mexico's regulatory system, which used to be largely transparent and science-based, nonfunctional. The lack of a transparent, timely, and science-based approval process by Mexico is unacceptable.

Compounding this uncertainty is Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's decree announcing the intent to phase out certain agricultural technologies, including the use of biotech corn for human consumption, by 2024. This decree, which is not based on science, is particularly concerning because it signals the potential rejection of currently pending permit approvals and opens the door to revocation of existing biotech authorizations. Additionally, there is the very real possibility this decree would impact corn intended for animal feed, even if it is not directly banned. We appreciate both Secretary Vilsack's and Ambassador Tai's focus on this issue.

Mexico's failure to adhere to its commitments under USMCA to conduct science-based reviews of pending biotech traits impedes U.S. producers' ability to utilize innovative new technologies that sustainably increase agricultural production to feed a growing world. The issuance of the decree complicates this further and threatens the stability of agricultural supply chains, which already face uncertainty, and jeopardizes our efforts to build a resilient food system, crucial to our national security. We must hold Mexico accountable to its USMCA commitments, otherwise, we risk access to one of the top, most reliable, export markets for U.S. agriculture.

Therefore, we ask that you seek assurances from President López Obrador that he and the Government of Mexico will abide by the biotechnology provisions laid out by the USMCA. If that fails, we request that you use the enforcement tools made available to you under the USMCA to hold Mexico accountable. Thank you again for your efforts on behalf of U.S. agriculture and trade. Our rural communities depend on it.

Sincerely,

Adrian Smith
Member of Congress

Jim Costa
Member of Congress

David Scott
Member of Congress

Glenn 'GT' Thompson
Member of Congress

Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress

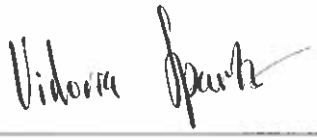
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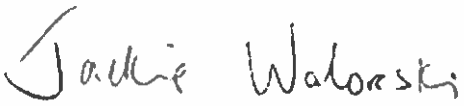
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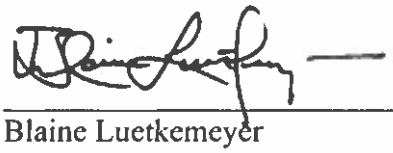
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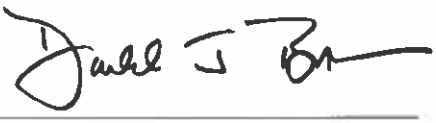
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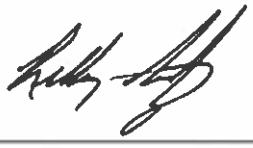
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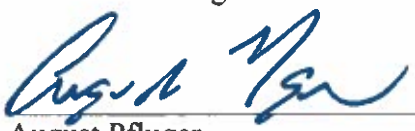
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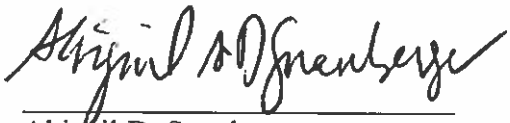
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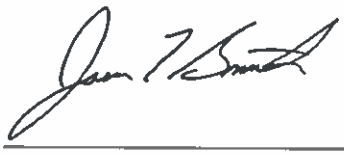
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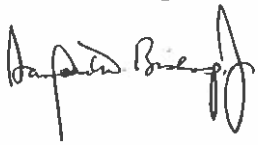
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