

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 31, 2014

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

We write to express our concern with the continued stoppages to official grain inspections at the Port of Vancouver in Washington State.

As you are aware, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) delegated certain critical responsibilities of the Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) to the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). However, in recent weeks, it has come to our attention that WSDA has been either unable or unwilling to perform its official grain inspection duties on a consistent or reliable basis. This is unacceptable.

Wheat growers play a significant role throughout the Midwestern and Northwestern United States. In the latter region, approximately 80 percent of wheat is exported abroad, with a significant portion going to Asia via export facilities in the Pacific Northwest. Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan pay a premium for wheat exports through the Northwest because they know that not only is it a high-quality wheat, but through the years, the region has provided timely and reliable delivery.

Our trading partners, as well as farmers, grain handlers, and exporters from the Northwest and Midwest, depend upon accurate, timely, and cost-effective delivery of mandated official grain inspection and weighing services administered by FGIS and its designated and delegated agencies. As such, it is imperative that we continue to assure all of our trading partners that the Port of Vancouver will continue to export a reliable supply of high-quality wheat, especially with wheat harvest already underway.

Understanding the gravity of this situation, we urge FGIS to immediately take action to meet its statutory obligation to inspect wheat exports. It is incumbent on USDA and FGIS to ensure the inspections are completed and to prevent similar disruptions in the future.

Sincerely,



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress



Doc Hastings
Member of Congress



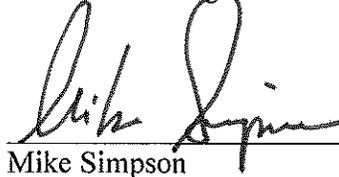
Dave Reichert
Member of Congress



Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress



Greg Walden
Member of Congress



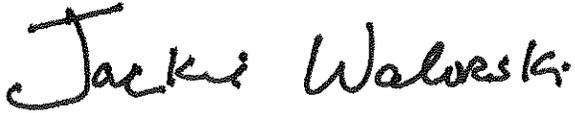
Mike Simpson
Member of Congress



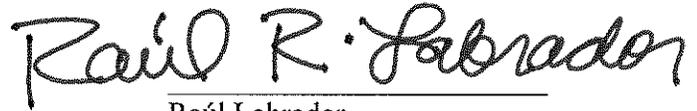
Steve Daines
Member of Congress



Kevin Cramer
Member of Congress



Jackie Walorski
Member of Congress



Raúl Labrador
Member of Congress