

March 1, 2022

U.S. Senate
Washington, DC, 20510

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC, 20515

Dear Senators and Representatives,

We, the undersigned organizations representing millions of taxpayers and consumers across the nation, write to urge you to reject new efforts to impose protectionist barriers on agricultural imports. These measures inflict enormous cost to both taxpayers and consumers and are not supported by empirical evidence.

Domestic growers have pushed a series of investigations by the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) into fruit and vegetable imports, alleging unfair practices and substantial harm to their business as a result. However, these investigations have not found any evidence of substantial harm.

An investigation into blueberry imports came to the conclusion that blueberries are not causing serious harm or even the threat of harm to domestic growers. The findings were upheld by a unanimous vote of the commission. In fact, another investigation into squash and cucumber imports found that imports from Mexico are actually *needed* to meet rising demand.

Despite these clear findings, the politicized investigations continue and domestic growers – along with some of their allies in government – still push the debunked notion that these imports unduly harm their operations. This is dangerous for the nation, especially at this point in our history.

The nation is currently feeling the effects of a global supply chain crisis. It is not uncommon to find empty grocery store shelves. At the same time, we are also dealing with historic levels of inflation that coincide with rising demand. All of this has combined to create sparsely available commodities that are more expensive than they have ever been.

In order to drive down prices and increase supply for American families trying to put food on their tables, our elected officials need to be champions of free trade. Demand for some of these products has increased by more than 20 percent. Meanwhile, domestic production has decreased in many instances. Now is not the time to be going after importers that are satisfying existing demands and keeping things affordable.

Given the lack of evidence to support the notion that these imports are unfairly harming domestic growers, any further barriers amount to corporate welfare policy. These growers are already the beneficiaries of a number of policies designed to promote their

commodities and economic wellbeing. They do not need extra insulation from external competition, especially in the midst of an existing supply chain crisis.

That is why we urge all members of Congress to resist the urge to impose any type of new protectionist barriers on imports or the fresh produce market. Our system is built on free enterprise and open competition. This competition serves to get quality products at affordable prices to American families.

Sincerely,

Taxpayers Protection Alliance

National Taxpayers Union

R Street Institute

60 Plus Association