

SAXBY CHAMBLISS, GEORGIA  
CHAIRMAN  
RICHARD G. LUGAR, INDIANA  
THAD COCHRAN, MISSISSIPPI  
MITCH McCONNELL, KENTUCKY  
PAT ROBERTS, KANSAS  
JAMES M. TALENT, MISSOURI  
CRAIG THOMAS, WYOMING  
RICK SANTORUM, PENNSYLVANIA  
NORM COLEMAN, MINNESOTA  
MIKE CRAPO, IDAHO  
CHARLES E. GRASSLEY, IOWA

# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON  
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6000  
202-224-2035  
TTY/TDD 202-224-2587

TOM HARKIN, IOWA  
RANKING DEMOCRATIC MEMBER  
PATRICK J. LEAHY, VERMONT  
KENT CONRAD, NORTH DAKOTA  
MAX BAUCUS, MONTANA  
BLANCHE L. LINCOLN, ARKANSAS  
DEBBIE STABENOW, MICHIGAN  
E. BENJAMIN NELSON, NEBRASKA  
MARK DAYTON, MINNESOTA  
KEN SALAZAR, COLORADO

December 13, 2006

The Honorable Susan Schwab  
United States Trade Representative  
600 17th Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20508

The Honorable Mike Johanns  
Secretary  
Department of Agriculture  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Ambassador Schwab and Secretary Johanns:

For the past three years the United States has patiently worked with our trading partners to resolve disruptions in trade flows of American beef exports. The slow opening of markets under commercially unfavorable circumstances was tolerated under the expectations that meaningful amounts of product would begin to move and government officials could resolve remaining sanitary and phytosanitary issues on the basis of internationally accepted scientific guidelines.

The result of our efforts has been the creation of an uneven and convoluted patchwork of export verification agreements that balkanize the beef trade and subject producers and processors to differing import requirements. This patchwork coupled with our willingness to forsake scientific principles in favor of political sensitivities in foreign countries has effectively deterred exports from the United States to once very profitable markets. The latest rejection of three shipments of U.S. beef to South Korea illustrates the difficulties facing the U.S. beef industry to secure fair and reasonable access to export markets. It also illustrates South Korea's blatant disregard for science based standards. In light of these events, it is extremely unlikely that American producers and processors will pursue further shipments to Korea; once a robust market for the cattle industry. Shockingly, these events have transpired concurrently with our efforts to negotiate a "free trade" agreement with that country.

The latest round of negotiations has resulted in little progress on the core issues and a refusal to resolve outstanding problems in our bilateral trade relationship. The continued intransigence of South Korean officials and negotiators causes us great concern. It would appear that continued negotiations on the proposed free trade agreement are unwise and signal to other potential and existing trading partners the willingness of the United States to continue its practice of capitulation in the face of an uneven and dishonest trading environment. We are not confident that continued negotiations will ultimately produce an agreement of fair, balanced or commercially meaningful consequence. Therefore, we urge you to suspend all negotiations with South

December 13, 2006  
Page 2

Korea until exports of U.S. beef resume and both countries agree on reasonable and fair bone tolerance levels for future shipments. Anything less will result in our opposition to a free trade agreement with South Korea.

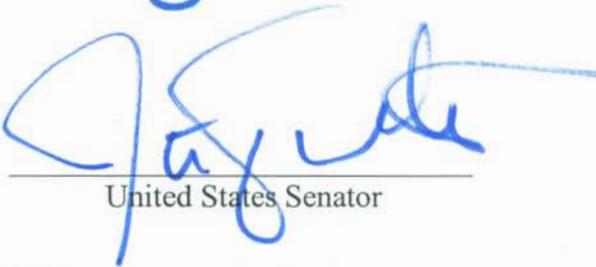
As Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, we regret coming to this decision since Korea is an important ally and trading partner. However, we cannot reward bad behavior and must stand behind farmers and ranchers in the United States who produce the safest, highest quality product the world has to offer. We have unfortunately set poor precedent in our dealings with the Japanese and cannot allow our position of advocating fair, science-based trade to erode further via a free trade agreement with South Korea under the current circumstances.

Thank you for your attention to this very important issue. We look forward to your prompt response to this letter.

Sincerely,

  
United States Senator

  
United States Senator

  
United States Senator

  
United States Senator

  
United States Senator

  
United States Senator

  
United States Senator