

## 1 BUSINESS MEETING

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3 THURSDAY, MAY 21, 2015

4 United States Senate,

5 Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry,

6 Washington, D.C.

7 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:51 a.m., in  
8 Room 328A, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Pat Roberts,  
9 Chairman of the committee, presiding.

10 Present or submitting a statement: Senators Roberts,  
11 Boozman, Hoeven, Perdue, Ernst, Tillis, Sasse, Grassley,  
12 Thune, Stabenow, Klobuchar, Bennet, Gillibrand, Donnelly,  
13 and Casey.

## 14 OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN ROBERTS

15 Chairman Roberts. Good morning. I call this meeting  
16 of the Senate Committee on Agriculture to order.

17 My colleagues, I think we are all aware that we have a  
18 vote at 10:30, and so we are pressed for time, and so we are  
19 going to make a short opening statement, then the  
20 distinguished Ranking Member will make her statement, and at  
21 that particular time, all of the people we have out with  
22 lassos trying to find two more Senators, hopefully, they  
23 will be successful and that we can take up what I think is a  
24 very good bill. It is a bipartisan bill and I have worked  
25 very hard with the distinguished Ranking Member. She has

1 been extremely helpful. And, so, it is in the same kind of  
2 bookshelf that we like to do around here with regards to  
3 bipartisan efforts.

4 Today's meeting is an important step in completing the  
5 committee's work to reauthorize provisions of the U.S. Grain  
6 Standards Act that expire later this year.

7 Now, earlier this month, we heard from stakeholders on  
8 what is working well and where we might want to make  
9 improvements. Ranking Member Stabenow and I have worked on  
10 this legislative draft with input from many of our  
11 colleagues, both on and off the committee, and together we  
12 have worked to address the concerns that we heard. I am  
13 pleased to offer our joint mark, the Roberts-Stabenow U.S.  
14 Grain Standards Act Reauthorization Act of 2015, or if you  
15 are in Michigan, the Stabenow-Roberts U.S. Grain Standards  
16 Act.

17 [Laughter.]

18 Chairman Roberts. The changes we make in this  
19 legislation are focused on improving transparency and  
20 predictability--let me repeat that, transparency and  
21 predictability--throughout the federal grain inspection  
22 system. We increased the opportunities for public input and  
23 Congressional oversight.

24 Specifically, we require the Secretary to take  
25 immediate action and to notify Congress if there is ever

1 another disruption in inspection like we saw in the Port of  
2 Vancouver last summer, and to keep us up to date on what is  
3 being done to resolve the disruption until inspections have  
4 started again.

5 Further, we require the Secretary to report to us on  
6 the changes that are being made to ensure that this  
7 situation does not happen again. The Department of  
8 Agriculture has a statutory obligation to inspect grain  
9 exports and we simply cannot let this responsibility lapse  
10 for 36 days again.

11 Additionally, we include a transparent process for  
12 certifying delegated states, allowing for public input.  
13 Regular reviews will ensure the reliability and quality of  
14 U.S. export for years to come.

15 So, voting in favor of this legislation is an important  
16 first step in making sure that our grain inspection system  
17 continues to facilitate U.S. exports. Again, transparency  
18 and predictability are key to maintaining our positive  
19 global reputation. This is important for our trading  
20 partners, and especially for farmers in Kansas and all of  
21 our states all across the country.

22 With that, I recognize my distinguished partner in this  
23 bill, Ranking Member Senator Stabenow.

24 OPENING STATEMENT OF SENATOR STABENOW

25 Senator Stabenow. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 Thank you first for your leadership. As always, it is  
2 wonderful working with you and your staff. I want to thank  
3 both of our staffs who, as usual, have done a wonderful job  
4 of putting together something, I think, that is thoughtful  
5 and responsible.

6 Our nation's farmers and producers grow the very best  
7 products available. We all know that. That is why U.S.  
8 agricultural exports totaled more than \$150 billion in 2014  
9 and supported more than a million jobs here at home. This  
10 bipartisan legislation not only supports those jobs, but, as  
11 the Chairman said, it also ensures that we keep our top spot  
12 as the number one farm goods exporter worldwide.

13 I am very pleased that the legislation includes  
14 provisions that support the integrity of our current  
15 inspection service and reaffirms the role of the federal  
16 government in the inspection of grain destined for foreign  
17 markets. This legislation also defends the interests of  
18 American farmers and protects the integrity of the United  
19 States as a trading partner.

20 So, I join the Chairman in urging all of our colleagues  
21 to support this bill, to move it swiftly, hopefully, onto  
22 the floor and pass it so it is signed into law before the  
23 September 30 extension--expires.

24 So, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25 Chairman Roberts. Thank you, Senator.

1           Seeing a quorum, I call to order a business meeting of  
2 the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and  
3 Forestry. The purpose of this meeting is for the committee  
4 to consider legislation to reauthorize the U.S. Grain  
5 Standards Act.

6           Each member has before them a copy of the committee  
7 print along with a brief summary of what the legislation  
8 would do. A motion would now be in order to report the  
9 committee print as an original bill.

10          Senator Stabenow. I so move.

11          Chairman Roberts. Is there a second?

12          Senator Hoeven. Second.

13          Chairman Roberts. I thank the Senator.

14          All those in favor, say aye.

15          [Chorus of ayes.]

16          Chairman Roberts. All those opposed, say nay.

17          [No response.]

18          Chairman Roberts. The ayes have it. A majority of the  
19 committee having voting in the affirmative, the committee  
20 print is ordered reported, and without objection, staff is  
21 authorized to make technical and conforming changes  
22 consistent with the actions of the committee today.

23          With that, the business meeting is adjourned. Let me  
24 remind my colleagues that I know you have pressing needs in  
25 other committees. It is a very busy day, and we do vote at

1 10:30, however, we have another matter to come before the  
2 committee.

3 Senator Hoeven. Mr. Chairman, if I may--

4 Chairman Roberts. Yes.

5 Senator Hoeven. I would just like to commend you and  
6 the Ranking Member on the fine work on this draft  
7 legislation, and I appreciate both the speed with which you  
8 came up with a solution and also commend you on the  
9 solution, and that it is bipartisan and, I think, supported  
10 by the Secretary and at least most all the farm groups that  
11 I have talked to. So, I just want to thank you and commend  
12 you.

13 Chairman Roberts. Senator, thank you so much for your  
14 very kind remarks.

15 [Whereupon, at 9:58 a.m., the Committee was adjourned.]