

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 11, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Mark A. Morgan
Acting Commissioner
U.S. Customs and Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20229

Mr. Louis DeJoy
Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza, S.W.
Room 4012
Washington, D.C. 20260

Dear Secretary Perdue, Acting Commissioner Morgan, and Mr. DeJoy,

Recently, numerous families in Michigan and across the country have received suspicious, unsolicited packages of seeds that appear to be sent from China. We are concerned that these mysterious seeds could potentially harbor foreign invasive species, plant pathogens, or insects that can pose a grave threat to our agricultural economy and the environment. It is vitally important that we prevent any harm to our food supply and agricultural economy.

We appreciate that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has taken steps to investigate the seeds and warn individuals not to plant them. We encourage the Department to continue closely monitoring these reports and support public awareness efforts.

It is alarming that the seeds were able to enter the country in the first place, and we urge U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the United States Postal Service (USPS) and USDA to work together to quickly detect these unsolicited seeds and prevent them from entering the United States.

We ask that you answer the following questions by August 25, 2020.

1. What steps is the federal government taking to investigate the suspicious, unsolicited seeds?
 - a. What are the initial results of your investigation?
2. What steps has the federal government taken to warn individuals not to plant the seeds?
3. How many individuals have been confirmed to have received the unsolicited seeds in the United States?
 - a. In which state(s) were they received?

- b. From where were the seeds mailed?
4. How many unsolicited packages of seeds have federal agencies and State departments of agriculture tested?
 - a. What are the results of such tests?
 - b. Have any dangerous coatings or substances been identified on any of the seeds?
5. Based on currently available information, what is the origin of the seeds, and what are potential explanations for why they may have been sent?
6. How many unsolicited seed packages, as described in the recent press reports, has CBP intercepted?
 - a. What measures is CBP taking to increase its screenings to intercept any such related unsolicited seeds?
7. How are USDA, CBP, and USPS coordinating detection and prevention efforts to inhibit potential future deliveries of unsolicited seeds?
8. Has the increased prevalence of these seed deliveries triggered an audit or review for this specific class of mail, based on size or origin?
 - a. What regulations exist on when to initiate an audit or review for threats such as these unsolicited mailings?

We appreciate your timely response and thank you for your work on this issue.

Sincerely,



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator