

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 19, 2017

The Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Ross:

On May 1, the Department of Commerce declared that after reaching “an impasse” in talks with Mexico on sugar trade disputes, the U.S. government has decided to “resume the collection of antidumping (AD) and countervailing duties (CVD) on sugar imports on June 5, 2017, unless an agreement is reached.” We write to you to express our concerns that an increase in the tariffs on imported sugar will increase the price of food to American consumers.

As you know, suspension agreements were previously implemented to avoid collection of the duties, but have drawn criticism from many quarters. However, the current suspension agreements clearly have not worked. They have harmed U.S. cane sugar refiners by creating a shortage of raw cane sugar, the refiners’ chief input. The agreements have harmed the food and beverage companies who use sugar in their products by artificially driving up raw sugar prices to historically high levels. By introducing new levels of complexity to the already-byzantine world of sugar policy, the suspension agreements have made the U.S. sugar regime even worse than before.

Workable, fair suspension agreements would be far preferable to actual imposition of AD and CVD duties, which would likely cut off all or most trade with Mexico. However, some proposals that have been made by the U.S. sugar lobby would actually make the agreements more onerous and burdensome, not less – and so would constitute the worst outcome of all. In particular, we would like to stress that –

- While a higher level of raw sugar should be required in the agreements, this must be done without the government picking winners and losers among private companies, so an improved set of agreements should ensure fair competition and not effectively limit shipments to only certain cane refineries; and
- The 2014 farm bill established price support levels for both raw and refined sugar, and Congress has taken no action to authorize the Administration to increase these support

levels, so improved suspension agreements should avoid any reference prices that effectively support U.S. sugar prices significantly above levels debated and approved by Congress, and in no case should reference prices be increased from their levels in the existing suspension agreements.

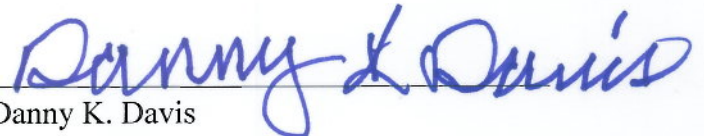
Finally, we strongly urge you to consult with, and take into account the interests of, the companies that make food products and beverages using sugar. These companies employ more than 600,000 of our fellow Americans directly, and account for many more indirect jobs. It is time for a balanced approach to the complicated issue of U.S.-Mexico sugar trade. These bilateral negotiations should not be an excuse for the U.S. sugar lobby to extract yet more benefits from its customers through market manipulation that flies in the face of open and fair competition.

We appreciate your consideration of these points as further deliberations on these issues continue, and look forward to continuing to work with you.

Sincerely,



Charles W. Dent
Member of Congress



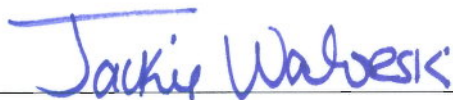
Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



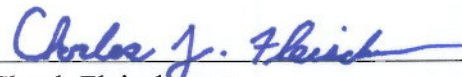
Virginia Foxx
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Jackie Walorski
Member of Congress



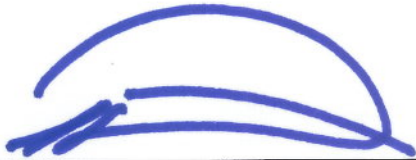
Chuck Fleischmann
Member of Congress



Phil Roe, M.D.
Member of Congress



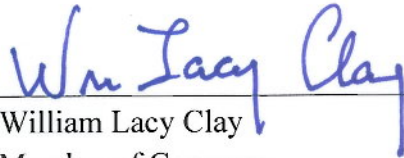
Bill Shuster
Member of Congress



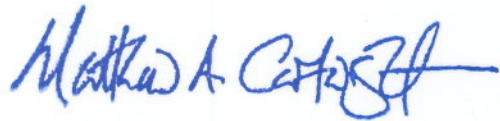
Scott DesJarlais, M.D.
Member of Congress



Lou Barletta
Member of Congress



William Lacy Clay
Member of Congress



Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress



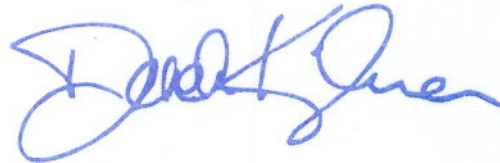
Robert E. Latta
Member of Congress



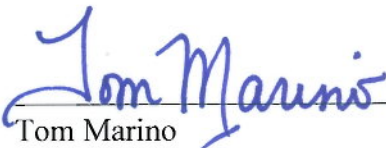
Todd Rokita
Member of Congress



Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



Tom Marino
Member of Congress



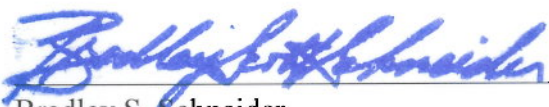
Andy Harris, M.D.
Member of Congress



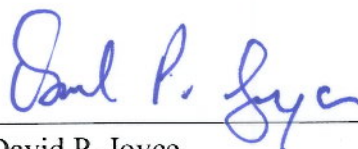
Bob Goodlatte
Member of Congress



Michael R. Turner
Member of Congress



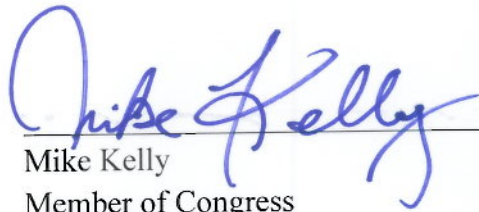
Bradley S. Schneider
Member of Congress



David P. Joyce
Member of Congress



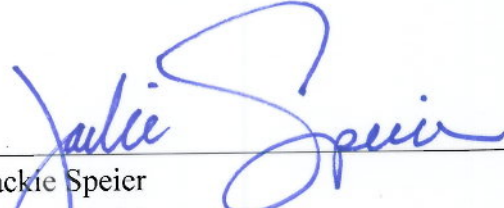
Patrick Meehan
Member of Congress



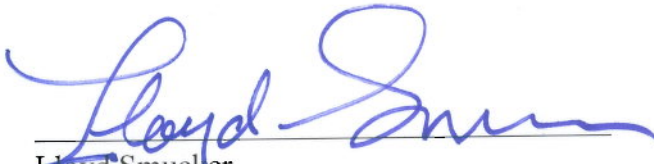
Mike Kelly
Member of Congress



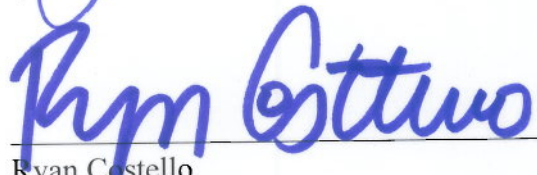
Steve Chabot
Member of Congress



Jackie Speier
Member of Congress



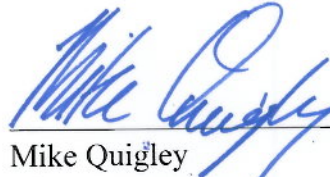
Lloyd Smucker
Member of Congress



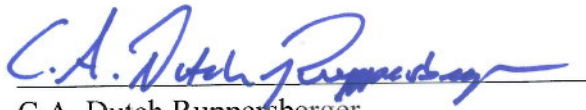
Ryan Costello
Member of Congress



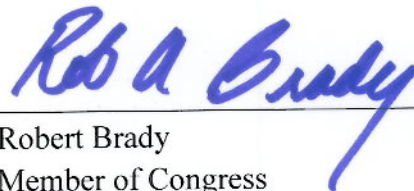
Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



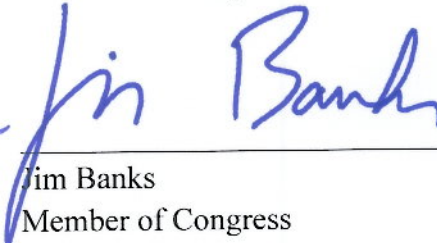
C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
Member of Congress



Robert Brady
Member of Congress



Glenn "GT" Thompson
Member of Congress



Jim Banks
Member of Congress



Chris Collins
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



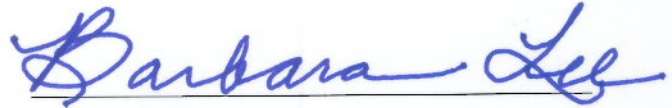
Louie Gohmert
Member of Congress



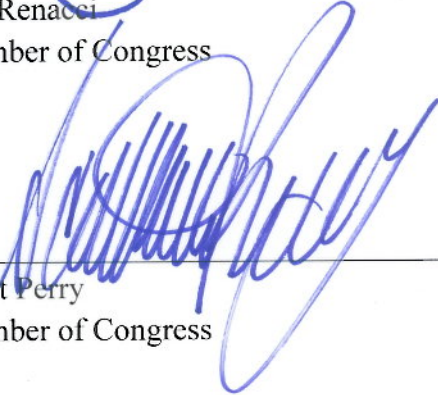
Luke Messer
Member of Congress



Jim Renacci
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



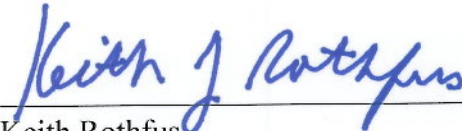
Scott Perry
Member of Congress



Lynn Jenkins
Member of Congress



Tim Murphy
Member of Congress



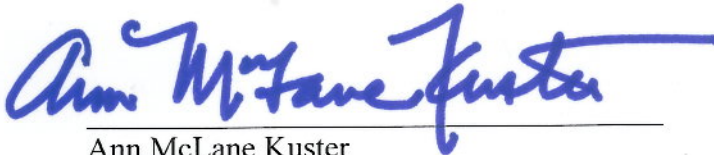
Keith Rothfus
Member of Congress



Diane Black
Member of Congress



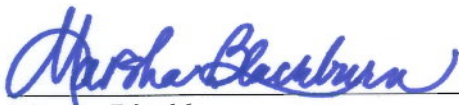
Steve Womack
Member of Congress



Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress



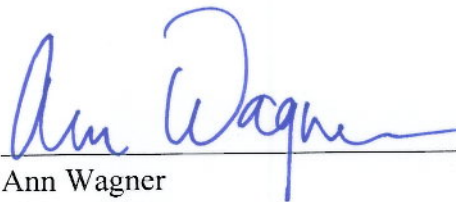
Mark Amodei
Member of Congress



Marsha Blackburn
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Leonard Lance". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Leonard Lance
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ann Wagner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Ann Wagner
Member of Congress