

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

November 26, 2012

The Honorable Frank Lucas  
Chairman  
House Committee on Agriculture  
1301 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Collin Peterson  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Agriculture  
1305 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Lucas and Ranking Member Peterson:

We fully support efforts to provide our growers and processors with the certainty of a five-year Farm Bill. However, should Congress not achieve an agreement before the end of the year, we write today to urge you to ensure the continuation and adequate funding for the Specialty Crop Research Initiative and the Clean Plant Network in any extension of the 2008 Farm Bill.

Specialty crops play a vital role in our nation's agriculture economy – accounting for nearly half of total farm-gate value and contribute to our \$44 billion agriculture trade surplus. According to the most recent agricultural census for specialty crops conducted by the USDA, more than 1.3 million people were directly employed by specialty crop producers. Unlike commodity crops, specialty crop producers and processors do not receive federal subsidies.

The 2008 Farm Bill recognized the importance of specialty crops by focusing resources for the first time on the unique research and pest management needs of specialty crop growers and processors. This included the creation of the Specialty Crop Research Initiative that has been critical in giving our growers the cutting edge tools they need to remain competitive in the global marketplace. This competitive grant program, which requires a dollar for dollar match from a nonfederal source, has been highly successful in addressing threats from pests and diseases, improving efficiencies, and preventing potential food safety hazards.

The 2008 Farm Bill also provided funding for the Clean Plant Network for the first time. This program has been an essential tool for ensuring that growers have access to disease-free rootstock when planting new fields or orchards. Not only is this an important resource for the grower planting the new crop, but it also prevents the spread of disease in some of our nation's most productive agricultural regions that could have severe implications for years to come.

The Farm Bill programs that support specialty crops and their producers are only a fraction of the total cost of the Farm Bill, yet they have broad effects across the country. Farmers from California and Washington, to Michigan and Florida that contribute greatly to rural

economies throughout the nation receive vital benefits from these programs, and during a time when our country faces high unemployment, especially in rural areas, we need to be doing everything possible to keep these jobs available and prevent further unemployment.

Recognizing the wide success and bipartisan support of the Specialty Crop Research Initiative and the Clean Plant Network, both the House and Senate versions of the five-year reauthorization of the Farm Bill continue strong investments in these programs. Unfortunately, due to the way the 2008 Farm Bill was written, a straight extension will allow these two vital programs to expire. A bipartisan group of 82 Members of Congress sent you a letter expressing support for these and other specialty crop programs earlier this year, and it is critical that any extension acknowledge this widespread support.

There is no question that the Farm Bill as a whole is a jobs bill, and that passing a five-year Farm Bill is what the economies in our rural communities need. That said, in the event that we cannot achieve that goal and must pass an extension of current law, we strongly urge you to ensure the continuation and adequate funding for these vital programs that affect nearly half of our agricultural economy.

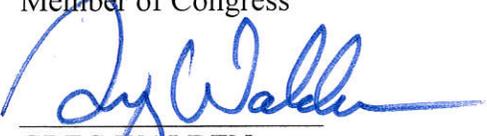
Sincerely,



JIM COSTA  
Member of Congress



DOC HASTINGS  
Member of Congress



GREG WALDEN  
Member of Congress



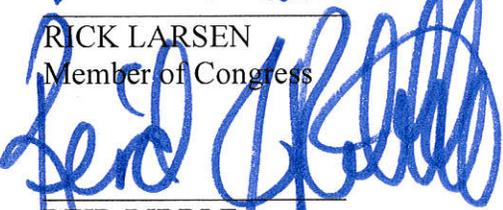
RICHARD HANNA  
Member of Congress



RICK LARSEN  
Member of Congress



BILL KEATING  
Member of Congress



REID RIBBLE  
Member of Congress



MAZIE HIRONO  
Member of Congress



LARRY KISSELL  
Member of Congress



DAVID RIVERA  
Member of Congress



PETER DEFAZIO  
Member of Congress



STEVE SOUTHERLAND  
Member of Congress



BILL OWENS  
Member of Congress



MIKE THOMPSON  
Member of Congress



MIKE MICHAUD  
Member of Congress



JAIME HERRERA BEUTLER  
Member of Congress



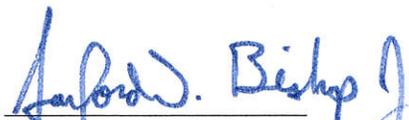
JERRY MCNERNEY  
Member of Congress



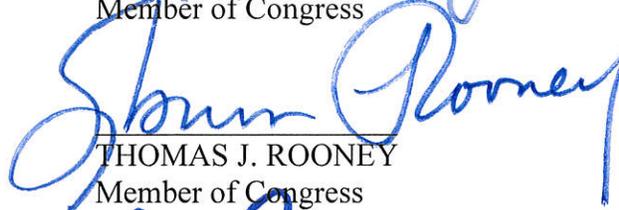
KATHY HOCHUL  
Member of Congress



CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS  
Member of Congress



SANFORD BISHOP  
Member of Congress



THOMAS J. ROONEY  
Member of Congress



MIKE SIMPSON  
Member of Congress



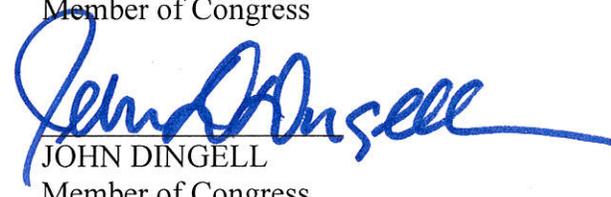
JOHN BARROW  
Member of Congress



TOM PETRI  
Member of Congress



MIKE MCINTYRE  
Member of Congress



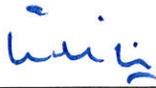
JOHN DINGELL  
Member of Congress



MARY BONO MACK  
Member of Congress



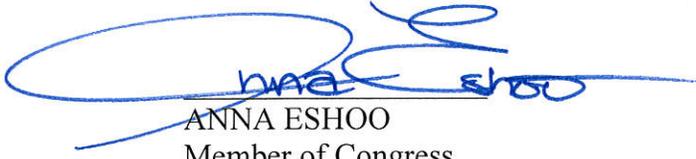
SUZANNE BONAMICI  
Member of Congress



GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLAN  
Member of Congress



KURT SCHRADER  
Member of Congress



ANNA ESHOO  
Member of Congress



BRIAN HIGGINS  
Member of Congress



SCOTT TIPTON  
Member of Congress



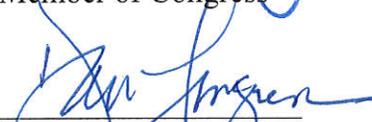
JOE COURTNEY  
Member of Congress



MAURICE HINCHEY  
Member of Congress



LOIS CAPPS  
Member of Congress



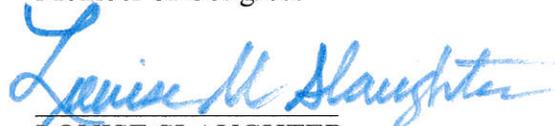
DAN LUNGREN  
Member of Congress



CORY GARDNER  
Member of Congress

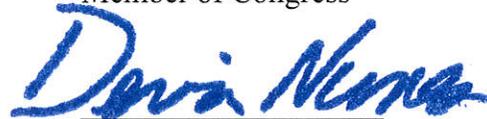


JOHN GARAMENDI  
Member of Congress



LOUISE SLAUGHTER  
Member of Congress

COLLEEN HANABUSA  
Member of Congress



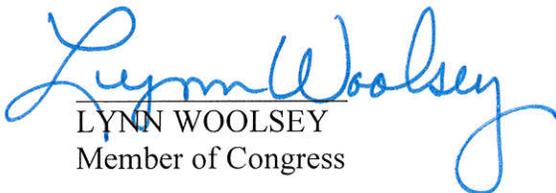
DEVIN NUNES  
Member of Congress



ELTON GALLEGLY  
Member of Congress



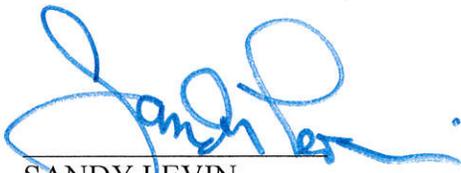
EARL BLUMENAUER  
Member of Congress



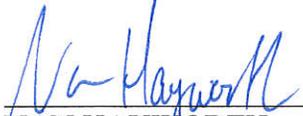
LYNN WOOLSEY  
Member of Congress



SEAN DUFFY  
Member of Congress



SANDY LEVIN  
Member of Congress



NAN HAYWORTH  
Member of Congress



KEN CALVERT  
Member of Congress



ROSCOE G. BARTLETT  
Member of Congress



ZOE LOFGREN  
Member of Congress



MARCY KAPTUR  
Member of Congress



DAVID REICHERT  
Member of Congress



JEFF DENHAM  
Member of Congress



JACKIE SPEIER  
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable John Boehner, Speaker of the House  
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Democratic Leader