

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 20, 2015

The Honorable Michael Froman
United States Trade Representative
600 17TH Street NW
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Ambassador Froman,

As strong supporters of the American farmer and the international trading system, we write to express our ongoing concern regarding the Administration's treatment of tobacco and tobacco products in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement. Over the past few years of the TPP negotiations, USTR has pushed for tobacco to be treated differently in TPP.

We strongly believe that the disparate treatment of any legal agricultural products in any chapter of a trade agreement is both unnecessary and counterproductive. Measures necessary to protect human, animal or plant life, or health or public morals are already covered by the exception found in U.S. and international (WTO) trade agreements, none of which you have proposed to change.

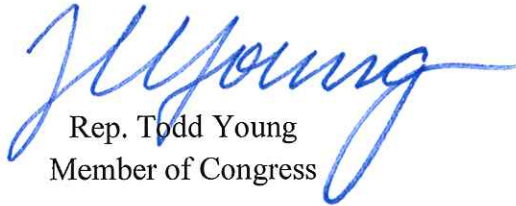
We believe the precedent established by carving out a particular agricultural commodity or related products for adverse treatment could be detrimental to a wide array of American agricultural and industrial products, opening the door to disparate and disparaging treatment of other legal products in future trade and investment agreements. As you are aware, the business and agriculture communities have registered strong, repeated and principled opposition to these unnecessary and harmful proposals. We regard weak assurances that U.S. negotiators would never agree to similar treatment for other products as wholly unpersuasive.

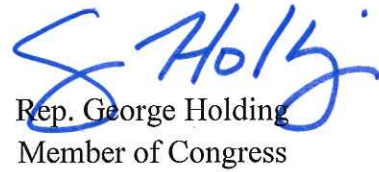
Further, any such change would represent a radical departure from longstanding policy, thereby setting a dangerous precedent that could impair trade flows, damage economies, and hurt workers and consumers. It would also impede the ability of businesses and farmers to reach important markets overseas. Altering fundamental principles long established in U.S. trade and investment agreements risks severely undermining our rules-based global trading system.

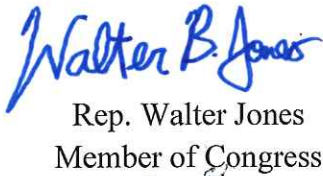
The United States should be strengthening agreements, not undermining them. In short, as we near the conclusion of the TPP negotiations, and work on a bipartisan basis to pass Trade Promotion Authority, we expect a strong TPP agreement that does not carve out or treat tobacco and tobacco products adversely in any way with respect to the protections and treatment otherwise applied and available to all legal commodities and products in all chapters of the TPP agreement. We see no substantive reason the trading system should break with its most fundamental principles – non-discrimination, proportionality, fairness, and due process – which are also embedded in the legal tradition that is at the core of U.S. ideals and policy.

On behalf of our constituents and other Americans, we urge USTR to give strongest consideration to the foregoing concerns.

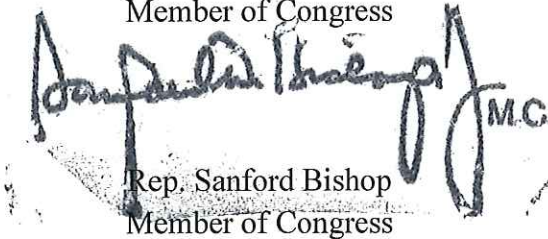
Sincerely,

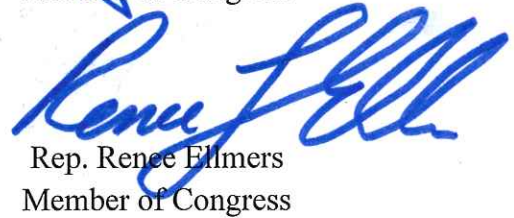

Rep. Todd Young
Member of Congress

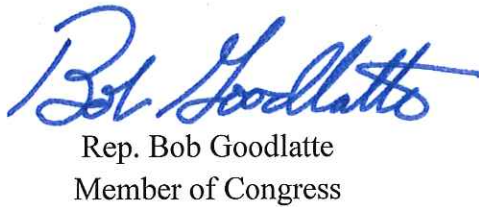

Rep. George Holding
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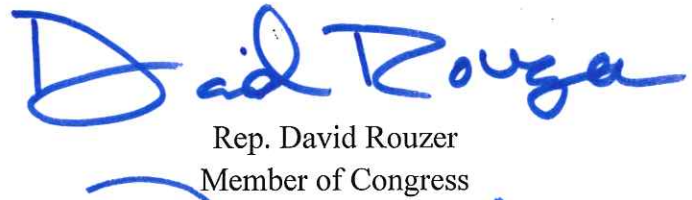

Rep. Walter Jones
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Rep. Andy Barr
Member of Congress

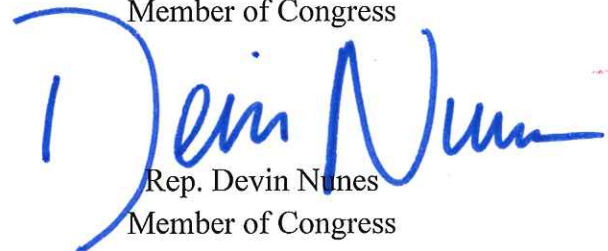

Rep. Sanford Bishop
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Rep. Renee Ellmers
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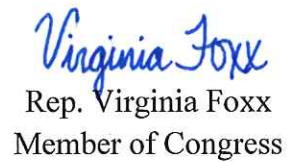

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