

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 11, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

Last May, a bipartisan and bicameral group of 37 members of Congress requested your Administration's assistance in opening the Japanese market for U.S. fresh table stock potatoes. Since that time, little progress has been made. We believe the Prime Minister of Japan's visit to the United States poses an opportunity to address this longstanding issue and make progress in finally allowing U.S. grown fresh potatoes to be exported to Japan.

Foreign trade is an important component of the more than \$100 billion U.S. potato industry. About 20 percent of American potatoes are exported, which contributes nearly \$4.8 billion in economic impact and supports nearly 34,000 jobs.

However, U.S. producers continue to face significant obstacles in gaining access to the market in Japan. Fresh potato (table stock) access to Japan was first requested almost 30 years ago and was elevated to a top priority in U.S.-Japan plant health negotiations in September 2019. If market access is achieved, the U.S. potato industry estimates it will result in an additional \$150 million per year in exports.

Despite the efforts of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Farming and Fisheries (MAFF) continues to delay substantive technical discussions on table stock access. During the most recent bilateral meetings in September 2023, MAFF again refused to provide a pest risk assessment to APHIS or any timetable for delivering one. Instead, their officials indicated that they would review individual pests over the next year. This marks the fifth year of discussions without any forward progress by MAFF to resolve this decades-long issue.

There is no valid phytosanitary justification for these delays, as the U.S. potato industry has a strong history of exporting fresh potatoes to many markets, including South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Thailand. These exports occur safely and routinely throughout the year, providing benefits both for consumers in the Indo-Pacific and our growers here in the United States.

We strongly urge you to raise this issue with Prime Minister Kishida during his visit to the United States. Technical discussions have not made meaningful progress and now is the time to find a solution for U.S. potato growers.

Thank you for your attention to this important trade matter for U.S. agriculture.

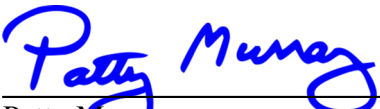
Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



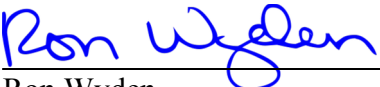
James E. Risch
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Mike Crapo
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



John Hoeven
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper
United States Senator