

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

TODD STAPLES
COMMISSIONER



March 19, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

For decades Texas and Mexico have worked hard to foster a trade partnership that benefits both sides of the border. Mexico represents the single largest buyer of Texas agricultural exports, totaling \$3.1 billion last year. However, this important economic relationship is in serious jeopardy now that the Mexican government has placed new tariffs on U.S. products.

I understand and support the need for all vehicles on Texas and U.S. roads to meet federal safety standards, but U.S. farmers should not have to pay the price for broken diplomatic relationships. The North American Free Trade Agreement was created, ratified and signed by three nations. Therefore, a unilateral decision regarding a tri-national agreement undermines the trade negotiation process. We must find a solution to avoid any further actions that could devastate a major component of our nation's economy – agricultural trade.

In these difficult economic times we need open markets, not higher taxes, especially when it comes to taxing the sale of our products into markets where consumers want them. With Texas farmers and ranchers working hard to overcome severe drought and hurricane damage, it is unconscionable to add to their hardships by putting up roadblocks and interfering with their ability to sell their products.

I urge you and your administration to negotiate in a venue where all sides can come to the table to discuss these critical issues and find agreeable solutions. By engaging in high-level talks with the Mexican government, hopefully we can quickly end this standoff over trucks and tariffs. The longer this situation drags on, the more Texas and American farmers will suffer.



Thank you for your consideration on this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can offer assistance in finding a resolution.

Sincerely yours,



Todd Staples

TS/BB/lsm

cc: The Honorable Tom Vilsack
The Honorable Gary Locke
The Honorable Ron Kirk
The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison
The Honorable John Cornyn
The Honorable Joe Barton
The Honorable Kevin Brady
The Honorable Michael Burgess
The Honorable John Carter
The Honorable Mike Conaway
The Honorable Henry Cuellar
The Honorable John Culberson
The Honorable Lloyd Doggett
The Honorable Chet Edwards
The Honorable Louie Gohmert
The Honorable Charlie Gonzalez
The Honorable Kay Granger
The Honorable Al Green
The Honorable Gene Green
The Honorable Ralph Hall
The Honorable Jeb Hensarling
The Honorable Ruben Hinojosa
The Honorable Sheila Jackson-Lee
The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson
The Honorable Sam Johnson
The Honorable Kenny Marchant
The Honorable Mike McCaul
The Honorable Randy Neugebauer
The Honorable Pete Olson
The Honorable Solomon Ortiz
The Honorable Ron Paul
The Honorable Ted Poe
The Honorable Silvestre Reyes
The Honorable Ciro Rodriguez
The Honorable Pete Sessions
The Honorable Lamar Smith
The Honorable Mac Thornberry