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March 18, 2013

United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Members of the United States Senate:

On behalf of cattle producers and independent cattle feeders across the country, the United States Cattlemen's Association (USCA) urges you to support amendment 0075 to the Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2013. This amendment is co-sponsored by Senators Jon Tester, Tim Johnson, Sherrod Brown, Patrick Leahy and Jay Rockefeller.

The FY 2013 Appropriations Bill currently contains language that eliminates funding to carry out proposed and existing Packers and Stockyards Act provisions. This "rider" continues to be placed on appropriations bills despite the fact that these provisions were passed into law via the 2008 Farm Bill. We believe it is entirely inappropriate to govern by removing funding that enforces appropriately debated and passed legislation. The defunding provision circumvents the established and respected process of developing policy in our country.

The bottom line is that this delay tactic undermines the entire function and mission of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Grain Inspection Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA). This rider encourages anti-competitive buying practices and undermines free market principles and the needed price discovery that occurs in a competitive marketplace. If this amendment does not pass, GIPSA will be severely undermined in its ability to carry out its oversight role within the marketplace.

Furthermore, if this amendment does not pass, thousands of cattle producers and independent cattle feeders will be susceptible to potential illegal buying practices. Given the fact that the U.S. cattle herd is at the lowest since the 1950s, tilting the playing field against producers negatively impacts the future of the U.S. cattle industry.

USCA urges you to vote to enable USDA-GIPSA to carry out its mission. If buyers in the marketplace are following the provisions within the Packers and Stockyards Act then there should be no concern about eliminating this rider and continue funding USDA GIPSA. Please support amendment 0075.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Jess Peterson at 202-870-3867 in the USCA Washington, DC office.

Respectfully,

Jon Wooster
President, U.S. Cattlemen's Association