

December 10, 2014

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Minority Leader Pelosi:

We strongly object to report language and legislative provisions included in the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015. The report language includes two particularly egregious provisions that direct the secretary of agriculture to propose changes to the Country-of-Origin Labeling (COOL) law as well as a provision that orders the secretary to refrain from implementing a reformed beef checkoff program. Additionally, the act includes a legislative provision that prohibits the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyard Administration (GIPSA) from implementing regulations on the livestock and poultry industry that would address an array of fraudulent, deceptive, anti-competitive and retaliatory practices.

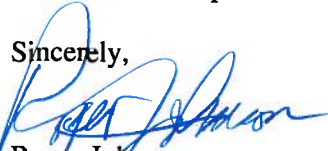
National Farmers Union (NFU) and the United States Cattlemen's Association (USCA) are very concerned that the report language included on COOL could be used as an opportunity to stop the appeals process at the World Trade Organization (WTO) or re-open the legislation that mandated COOL, both of which are unacceptable. Congress should not intervene in the WTO process.

The report language also directs the secretary not to implement a second beef checkoff program. The secretary published a Notice of Inquiry to seek public comments. The comment period closes today, and over 1300 individuals have commented. National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) is so fearful of losing its \$40 million-plus revenue stream through the beef checkoff that it has lobbied for this language to be included in the report rather than allowing producers the ability to have their comments recognized and addressed through the commenting process. NCBA has lobbied Congress on a mandatory producer checkoff program that they control.

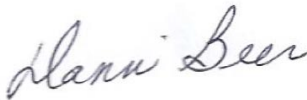
Additionally, the legislative provision that effectively guts the GIPSA law, Section 731, would deny farmers protection from retaliation when they use their First Amendment rights to speak with congressional representatives, deny them the right to a jury trial, and deny them the right to request information on how their pay is calculated. This provision is unconscionable. Its inclusion in a funding bill is unacceptable to NFU's and USCA's members.

We strongly object to the use of the appropriations process as a mechanism to limit the secretary's authority to uphold the COOL law, to respond to the dire need for reform of the beef checkoff, and to address anti-competitive market concerns.

Sincerely,



Roger Johnson
President
National Farmers Union



Danni Beer
President
United States Cattlemen's Association

December 10, 2014

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

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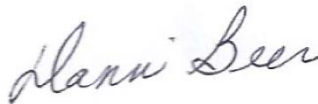
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cc: U.S. Senate