

December 2, 2014

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairwoman
Senate Appropriations Committee
The Capitol S-128
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
The Capitol S-146-A
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski and Ranking Member Shelby:

The undersigned 207 farm, ranch, rural, faith, labor, environmental, farmworker, manufacturing and consumer organizations urge the leadership of the Senate Appropriations Committee to reject any effort to weaken, suspend or rescind mandatory Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) in the upcoming legislation to provide funding for the federal government for the remainder or part of Fiscal Year 2015.

American consumers are increasingly interested in understanding more about the origins of their food and the public overwhelmingly supports Country of Origin Labeling. The commonsense COOL labels that are in place today provide additional and more accurate information about where their food comes from. Farmers are proud of the food they put on American dinner tables and support the current COOL labels that allow consumers to make more informed food purchasing decisions.

Congress enacted COOL in the 2002 and 2008 Farm Bills in response to the broad-based support for these sensible labels. Since 2008, the World Trade Organization has been weighing a dispute over COOL that will most likely continue past the end of Fiscal Year 2015. The WTO has ruled that COOL labels are legitimate but continues to weigh the implementation of the labeling requirements. Importantly, in each successive deliberation, the WTO has been increasing receptive to the legitimacy of the Congressionally mandated labels.

Congress should not short circuit the WTO process; nor should it unconditionally surrender to the threats of tariff retaliation by our trading partners. We believe the United States has strong grounds to appeal the most recent WTO ruling. Last week, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative officially announced it would appeal the latest ruling.

The Senate rejected efforts to weaken COOL in the 2014 Farm Bill and the FY 2015 Agricultural Appropriations measure. Indeed, the Farm Bill *added* venison to the list of products that receive the COOL label. We do not believe that Congress should make any legislative change to weaken, suspend or rescind COOL at this juncture; nor do we believe it is appropriate to make legislative changes to these popular labels outside of the full view of the American public as the Appropriations Committee leadership negotiates the upcoming spending legislation. We urge you to reject any effort to undermine these commonsense labels.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Missions, Inc. (NY)
Alabama Contract Poultry Growers Association
American Agri-Women
American Agriculture Movement

American Federation of Government Employees (AFL-CIO), Local 3354, USDA-St. Louis
American Grassfed Association
American Outdoor Products (CO)

American Raw Milk Producers Pricing Association
Angelica Organics Learning Center (IL)
Arkansas Farmers Union
Ashtabula, Geauga, Lake County (OH) Farmers' Union
Astronaut Foods (CO)
Atlantic States Legal Foundation, Inc. (NY)
Backpacker's Pantry (CO)
Berks (PA) Gas Truth
Buckeye Quality Beef Association (OH)
California Dairy Campaign
California Farmers Union
Campaign for Contract Agriculture Reform
Campaign for Family Farms and the Environment
Caney Fork Headwaters Association (TN)
Carolina Farm Stewardship Association (NC)
Cattle Producers of Louisiana
Cattle Producers of Washington
Center for Family Farm Development (GA)
Center for Food Safety
Center for Media and Democracy's Food Rights Network
Center for Rural Affairs
Central Co-op (WA)
Chicago Consumer Coalition
Church Women United in New York State
Citizen Action Coalition of Indiana
The CJD Foundation
Cleanwater Action Council of Northeast Wisconsin
Coalition for a Prosperous America
Colorado Independent CattleGrowers Association
Colorado Spice
Communication Workers of America Local 1082 (NJ)
Community Farm Alliance (KY)
Community Food and Justice Coalition (CA)
Consumer Action
Consumer Assistance Council, Inc.
Consumer Federation of America
Consumer Federation of California
The Consumer Federation of the Southeast
Consumers Union
Contract Poultry Growers Association of the Virginia
The Cornucopia Institute
Cornucopia Network NJ/TN Chapter
Crawford Stewardship Project (WI)
Crowley-Kiowa-Lincoln (CO) Stock Growers
Cumberland Countians for Ecojustice (TN)
Dakota Resource Council
Dakota Rural Action of SD
Delmar Farmers Market (NY)
Dock to Dish (NY)
East New York Farms!/United Community Centers
Eco-Justice Ministries (CO)
Ecological Farming Association (CA)
The Ecology Party of Florida
Equal Exchange
Ethical Eating Task Force (CO)
Fair World Project (OR)
Family Farm Defenders (WI)

Farm Aid
Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance
Farmworker Association of Florida
Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance
Fund
Florida Certified Organic Growers and Consumers, Inc.
Food & Water Watch
Food Chain Workers Alliance
Food Democracy Now!
Friends of the Earth U.S.
Georgia Organics
Glenn Miller Seed, Inc. (OR)
Global Justice Ecology Project
Government Accountability Project
Grassroots International
Hawaii Farmers Union United
Hmong National Development, Inc.
Idaho Organization of Resource Councils
Illinois Agri-Women
Illinois Farmers Union
Illinois Stewardship Alliance
Independent Beef Association of North Dakota (I-
BAND)
Independent Cattlemen of Nebraska
Independent Cattlemen of Wyoming
Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas
Indian Nations Conservation Alliance
Indiana Farmers Union
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
International Brotherhood of Teamsters
International Texas Longhorn Association
Intertribal Agriculture Council
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement
Iowa Farmers Union
Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future (MD)
Kansas Cattlemen's Association
Kansas Farmers Union
The Kitchen Community (CO)
The Land Connection (IL)
Land Stewardship Project (MN)
Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy,
Teachers College Columbia University (NY)
Loretto Earth Network (CO)
Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
(MOFGA)
Maine Sustainable Agriculture Society
Marais River Livestock Association (MT)
Massachusetts Consumers' Council, Inc.
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute (WI)
Michigan Farmers Union
Midwest Organic Dairy Producers Association
Minnesota Farmers Union
Minnesota State National Farmers Organization
Mississippi Assoc. of Cooperatives
Missouri Farmers Union
Missouri Rural Crisis Center
Missouri's Best Beef Cooperative

Montana Farmers Union
 Murray County (OK) Independent Cattlemen's Association
 National Consumers League
 National Family Farm Coalition
 National Farmers Organization
 National Farmers Union
 National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry
 National Hmong American Farmers, Inc.
 National Latino Farmers & Ranchers Trade Association
 National Organic Coalition
 National Women Involved in Farm Economics
 National Young Farmers Coalition
 Nature Abounds (PA)
 Nebraska Farmers Union
 Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society
 Nebraska Women Involved in Farm Economics
 Network for Environmental & Economic Responsibility of United Church of Christ
 Nevada Live Stock Association
 New England Farmers Union (CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT)
 New Jersey State Industrial Union Council
 New York Women Involved in Farm Economics
 N. Carolina Assoc. of Black Lawyers, Land Loss Prevention Project
 North Dakota Farmers Union
 Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance
 Northeast Organic Farming Assoc. - MA
 Northeast Organic Farming Assoc. - NH
 Northeast Organic Farming Assoc. - NJ
 Northeast Organic Farming Assoc. - NY
 Northeast Organic Farming Assoc. - RI
 Northeast Organic Farming Association, Interstate Council (NOFA-IC)
 Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group
 Northern Plains Resource Council (MT)
 Northern Wisconsin Beef Producers Assoc.
 Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance (MA)
 Northwest Farm Bill Action Group
 Northwest Farmers Union
 Northwest Forest Worker Alliance (CA, OR & WA)
 Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association
 Ohio Environmental Stewardship Alliance
 Ohio Farmers Union
 Oregon Consumers League
 Oregon Rural Action
 Organic Consumers Association
 Organic Farmers' Agency for Relationship Marketing (OFARM)
 Organic Seed Alliance
 Organic Seed Growers and Trade Association (OSGATA)
 Organization for Competitive Markets
 Partnership for Earth Spirituality
 PCC Natural Markets (WA)
 Peach Bottom Concerned Citizens Group (PBCCG) (PA)

Pennsylvania Farmers Union
 Pennypack Farm and Education Center (PA)
 Pesticide Action Network North America
 Powder River Basin Resource Council (WY)
 Progressive Agriculture Organization (PA)
 Public Citizen
 R-CALF United Stockgrowers of America
 Ranch Foods Direct (CO)
 Raritan Headwaters Association (NJ)
 Real Food for Kids - Montgomery (MD)
 Real Men Charities, Inc.
 Rochester Technology & Manufacturing Association (NY)
 Rocky Mountain Farmers Union
 Rooted in Community (CA)
 Roots of Change (CA)
 Rural Advancement Foundation International - USA (RAFI-USA)
 Rural and Agricultural Council of America
 Rural Coalition/Coalición Rural
 Rural Vermont
 Sister Eden (MD)
 Small Planet Institute
 South Dakota Farmers Union
 South Dakota Livestock Auction Markets Association
 South Dakota Stockgrowers Association
 Texas Farmers Union
 Tilth Producers of Washington
 Tooling, Manufacturing and Technologies Assoc. (MI)
 Transition Newton & Northwest NJ
 U.S. Cattlemen's Association
 United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries
 Valley Organic Growers Association (CO)
 Virginia Association for Biological Farming
 Virginia Citizens Consumer Council
 Walter's Signs (NJ)
 Western Colorado Congress
 Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC)
 WhyHunger
 Williams County Alliance (OH)
 Wisconsin Farmers Union
 Women, Food and Agriculture Network