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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1805

May 14, 2019

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Donald J. Trump
President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. President,

For decades, China has taken advantage of the American principles of free and open trade. In return they have not only limited access to their own markets but have also systematically engaged in unfair trade practices that have done great harm to Americans and American industries. I am encouraged to finally have a President who will stand up to the Chinese and hold them accountable for their manipulative and underhanded trade practices.

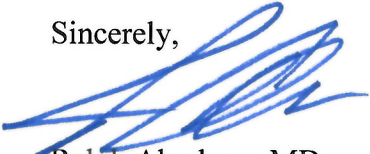
In response to the Administration's recent trade actions, the Chinese have singled out one of America's greatest assets for retaliation, our farmers. I understand the pressing need to hold the Chinese accountable, but I am gravely concerned that American agriculture is increasingly shouldering the burden of this trade dispute.

Chinese retaliation has had a severe impact on America's farmers and may have long term repercussions. The Market Facilitation Program payments in 2018 did much to help offset the market disruptions caused by targeted Chinese tariffs. However, a particular weakness of the program – payments based on harvested production instead of average production - failed to account for significant disruptions, including natural disasters and transportation backlogs, which hindered farmers' ability to harvest, store and market crops.

Accordingly, I urge you to quickly consider an additional round of the Market Facilitation Program payments, and most importantly, to amend the program to use average production instead of harvested production, including for the 2018 crop year. Urgent action is needed to instill confidence in the rural economy and to protect America's thin green line.

I stand ready to work with you in any way I can to ensure that America's farmers can continue to lead the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R. Abraham', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ralph Abraham, MD
MEMBER OF CONGRESS