

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 10, 2020

The Honorable Robert Lighthizer
United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Ambassador Lighthizer,

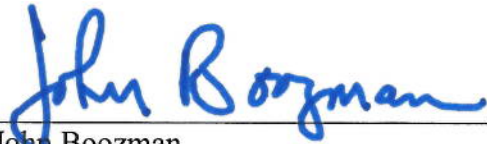
We want to first thank you for the work your team has done and continues to do to ensure U.S. farmers and ranchers can compete on a level playing field across the world. You have already helped deliver several of the President's key trade goals, and he has established ambitious goals for your team in 2020. With the January 31, 2020, departure of the United Kingdom (U.K.) from the European Union (E.U.), one of those goals is to clinch a trade agreement with the newly-independent U.K. before the end of this year. As Senators representing rice-producing states and the associated farmers, millers, merchants and others involved in the supply chain, we encourage you to take advantage of the rice demand in the U.K. to achieve increased market access for U.S.-grown rice through your upcoming negotiations.

As a country without domestic rice production, the U.K. imports more than 600,000 metric tons of rice annually to meet their consumers' growing demand. Due to the U.K.'s diverse population and diets, there is an opportunity to grow market access for all types and forms of high-quality U.S.-grown rice. The E.U., and by extension the U.K.'s, customs union assesses a steep tariff on U.S. rice outside of the roughly 38,000-ton quota and currently applies a 25 percent retaliatory tariff on all U.S. rice, making sales and market growth difficult.

Prior to 2007, the U.K. was one of the largest export destinations for American rice, with a 10-year annual average of 115,000 metric tons, until a market-closing biotech detection occurred. In most cases, a biotech detection event is overcome through sound science and time; however, the E.U. and their member states have continued to severely limit access for U.S.-grown rice more than 10 years later. The U.K. is not expected to maintain these protectionist barriers. Given market demand and existing relationships with Britain's importers, the U.S. rice industry stands ready to regain significant market share through these negotiations. Restoring this important export market would have a remarkably positive economic impact throughout rice country, which, like the rest of the agricultural economy, has been struggling in recent years.

We appreciate what you have done on behalf of U.S. agriculture and look forward to your response.

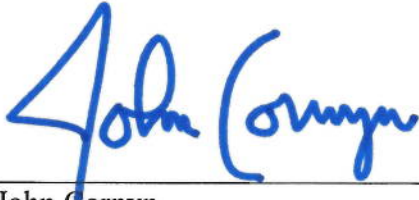
Sincerely,



John Boozman
US Senator



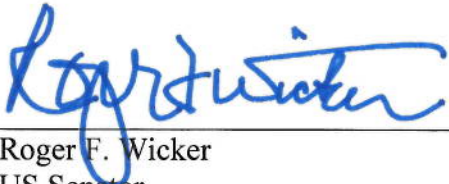
Tom Cotton
US Senator



John Cornyn
US Senator



Ted Cruz
US Senator



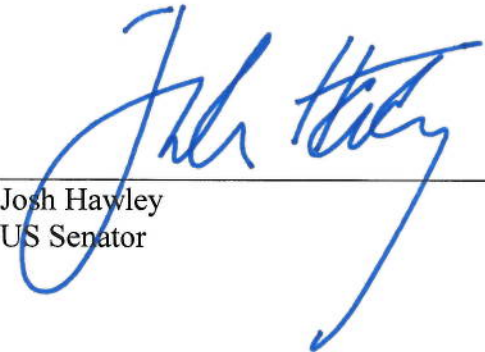
Roger F. Wicker
US Senator



Cindy Hyde-Smith
US Senator



Roy Blunt
US Senator



Josh Hawley
US Senator

CC: Ambassador Gregg Doud
Secretary Sonny Perdue