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United States Senator
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September 21, 2021

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-0235

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

We are writing to you in regards to the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service's proposed rule *Onions Grown in South Texas and Imported Onions; Termination of Marketing Order 959 and Change in Import Requirements*. This rule has the potential to greatly harm our nation's onion producers.

The state of Idaho and Malheur County, Oregon together make up one of the highest onion-producing regions in the United States. Producers from this region ship onions beginning in August into June the following year, following Federal Marketing Order #958. Northwest producers are reliant on Marketing Order #959 during those three months in which Marketing Order #958 does not apply. The removal of Marketing Order #959 will put Northwest producers at an extreme competitive disadvantage to foreign producers when not covered by Marketing Order #958. During June, July, and August, domestic shippers and growers would still fall under necessary grading and inspections requirements, while foreign produce is imported without the close monitoring, regulation, and inspection imposed on domestic producers.

Onion producers in the United States work tirelessly to ensure their products are safe, healthy, and meet necessary federal requirements. Allowing foreign produce to be sold without the same expectation and expense would be a severe detriment to domestic producers and markets.

We request that the USDA reinstate Federal Marketing Order #959 in order to ensure fair competition between domestic and foreign produce. If this is not possible, we ask further action be taken in order to increase import standards by extending Marketing Order #958 year-round. These actions are necessary to protect our domestic producers and rural communities.

Sincerely,



JAMES E. RISCH
United States Senator



MIKE CRAPO
United States Senator



MIKE SIMPSON
Member of Congress



RUSS FULCHER
Member of Congress