October 15, 2020

The Honorable Robert Lighthizer
United States Trade Representative
600 17th St NW,
Washington, DC  20006

Dear Ambassador Lighthizer:

We write to you about ongoing negotiations between the Office of the United States Trade Representative and the Government of India. As you continue discussions with Prime Minister Modi’s Administration to reach a trade deal and potentially reinstate India’s Generalized System of Preference Status, we would like to stress the importance of removing existing barriers to the export of U.S. agricultural products, specifically pecans.

As you may know, American pecan producers have faced many challenges due to rising imports from Mexico, Chinese tariffs, natural disasters like Hurricane Michael, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Gaining access to new markets for pecans will help ease the pain while orchards are replanted and a trade deal is negotiated with China.

The growing middle class in India has demonstrated its desire for consumer-oriented agricultural products, like tree nuts, and the Indian market represents one of the most dynamic and fastest growing in the world. Unfortunately, the current high tariff (36 percent) that India charges on pecan imports makes it difficult for American producers to compete in this important market. In contrast, we understand that the current Indian tariffs on U.S. pistachios and almonds is much lower (10 percent), which highlights how disproportionately high the pecan tariff is. Lowering the tariff on pecans would provide the Indian people with more economical access to tree nut varieties, while providing a much-needed economic boost to rural America.

The pecan industry contributes over $3.57 billion to the economies of the 15 pecan producing states in the United States. Over the last ten years, exports alone have pumped an additional $1.25 billion in economic activity into rural America. Reducing trade barriers into India is an opportunity to strengthen the economy of rural America.

Thank you for your work to expand access for American agricultural products around the world.

Sincerely,

Austin Scott
Member of Congress

Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress
Ralph Abraham, M.D.
Member of Congress

Robert B. Aderholt
Member of Congress

Rick W. Allen
Member of Congress

Bradley Byrne
Member of Congress

Earl L. “Buddy” Carter
Member of Congress

Michael Cloud
Member of Congress

Tom Cole
Member of Congress

Doug Collins
Member of Congress
Greg Stanton  
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Xochitl Torres Small  
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Rob Woodall  
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William Timmons  
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Filemon Vela  
Member of Congress