

RAUL RUIZ, M.D.

36TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0536

March 2, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

The Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary
Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Perdue and Secretary Ross,

I am requesting protection for grape growers in the Coachella Valley who are forced to compete against unfairly and below-market priced imports from Mexico.

The Coachella Valley grows some of the finest produce in the United States due to an environment that sees more than 350 days of sunshine per year, low risk of frost, and nutrient-rich soils. California grows 99% of the table grapes grown in the United States, and the Coachella Valley is responsible for roughly \$100 million worth of that production. This production and the future of the industry is being threatened by artificially low-priced imports of grapes from Mexico.

Imports of Mexican grapes have increased exponentially over the past few years. For example, Mexican imports increased from 9.5 million boxes in 2017 to an estimated 22 million boxes that crossed the border in 2019. In addition to competing with cheap imports from Mexico, California grape growers have been affected by the Administration's trade war and have been hit with tariffs on shipments to China that have resulted in a 40% drop in exports.

Grape growers in my district are struggling to obtain a level playing field. They are unable to utilize current anti-dumping and countervailing duty remedies because the current statute does not take into account injury to crops that are seasonal and perishable in nature. Although grape growers in my district do not comprise a majority of the industry, the loss of revenue is impactful on their businesses and livelihoods.

Please respond with any actions that have been taken by your departments to protect the grape industry in the Coachella Valley. In addition, I am requesting an in-person briefing to discuss both how your departments can advocate on behalf of my constituents and how we can work together to ensure that growers in my district have the tools available to them to protect against unfair foreign competition.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter and I look forward to working with you to help protect grape growers in the Coachella Valley from products unfairly imported below market-value.

Sincerely,

Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress