



The Hon. Mary Ng, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6

The Hon. Marie-Claude Bibeau, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food
1341 Baseline Rd.
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0C5

December 16, 2020

Dear Ministers,

On September 29th, the United States Trade Representative, Robert Lighthizer, issued a request to the United States International Trade Commission (USITC), to initiate a Section 201 safeguard investigation into US blueberry imports.

Further to this deeply concerning and meritless investigation, on November 3rd, Mr. Lighthizer sent an additional letter to USITC requesting they begin an investigation into strawberries and bell peppers as well.

Should the fact-finding investigation move into a safeguard investigation, the USITC could recommend to the President, within 21 days, that a provisional tariff or a quota (among other measures) be applied to imports.

Canada was the fourth largest producer of total US blueberry imports in 2019, and according to the BC Blueberry Council, the largest supplier of frozen berries.

A finding that blueberries, strawberries, or bell peppers are being imported “in such increased quantities as to be a substantial cause of serious injury, or the threat thereof, to the domestic industry...” could result in tariffs, quotas, or other measures that would have a devastating impact on hard-working Canadian farmers. Growing regions in British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia would be especially hard-hit.

In 2019, these three products alone represented \$750,000,000 CAD of exports to the United States, supporting over 8300 farm families, thousands of Canadian jobs directly, as well as numerous indirect jobs in the transportation, production, and value-added sectors.

The Official Opposition have been advocating for strong, swift, and immediate attention by your government since the investigation into blueberries was first announced. Now that additional Canadian agricultural products are under threat, your government must act expeditiously to protect Canadian farmers.

With the signing of CUSMA just this year, it is concerning that there were not failsafe measures negotiated to mitigate these type of investigations.

We urge you to proactively address this impending trade issue. Immediate action is needed to safeguard and give certainty to our farmers and protect thousands of Canadian jobs.

Your urgent intervention in this matter is needed and we call on you to:

- 1) Immediately raise this issue with US Trade Representative Lighthizer, making clear the value of Canadian agricultural products and CUSMA obligations;
- 2) Defend Canadian farmers through the investigation processes and ensure the obligations under CUSMA are upheld;
- 3) Promptly begin a consultation process to release a list of US products for retaliatory tariffs, quota's or other measures.

Our agricultural exports play an integral role our economy, and our hard-working farmers produce world class products.

With the additional challenges we face as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is clear that food security and sustainability is of paramount importance. We look forward to your response, and to learning more about your comprehensive plan to defend Canadian agriculture from these meritless safeguard investigations.

Sincerely,



Tracy Gray, M.P.
Shadow Minister for Export Promotion
and International Trade
Member of Parliament for Kelowna-Lake
Country



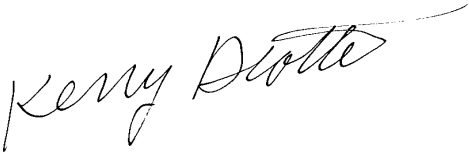
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Shadow Minister of Agriculture and Agri-
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Member of Parliament for Lambton-Kent-
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Tako Van Popta, M.P.
Member of Parliament for Langley-
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Hon. Ed Fast, P.C., M.P.
Member of Parliament for Abbotsford



Dave Epp, M.P.
Member of Parliament for Chatham-Kent-
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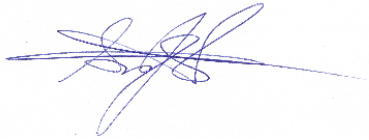
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