

April 28, 2010

Dear Representative (**Members of House Agriculture Committee**):

As representatives of America's agriculture and agribusiness community, broader business community and other advocates, we urge you to cosponsor and vote to report favorably from the Committee on Agriculture H.R. 4645, the *Travel Restriction Reform and Export Enhancement Act*.

Since sales of U.S. farm goods were allowed to Cuba in 2000, U.S. farmers have seen \$4 billion in sales into the market and payment has been received from the Cubans without issue. Unfortunately, due to continued arbitrary restrictions on U.S. agricultural sales, American producers have failed to realize the full potential of this market. Your support is important in helping America's farmers increase their export sales, especially in these difficult economic times.

H.R. 4645 will not repeal the U.S. embargo or lift the restrictions on credit. Cuban exports to the United States would continue to be prohibited. The bill simply clarifies how U.S. farmers and agricultural businesses conduct sales to Cuba and allows U.S. citizens to travel to Cuba, consistent with their ability to do so to every other country, including other U.S. sanctioned countries. These modest changes will establish and protect U.S. agriculture's reputation as a reliable supplier and provide the opportunity to maintain and grow U.S. agricultural sales to Cuba.

H.R. 4645 has three provisions:

1. It will reverse the controversial February 22, 2005, Office of Foreign Assets Control interpretation of the term "payment of cash in advance" for sales to Cuba. This regulatory restriction is contrary to the *Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000*, which allows for the shipment of agricultural goods under a broader interpretation of "payment of cash in advance" terms, consistent with practices successfully used by U.S. exporters with other importers, which prior to 2005 included Cuba.
2. The bill will eliminate the expensive and discriminatory requirement that payments to U.S. agricultural sellers must pass through banks in third countries. This process increases the cost of purchasing U.S. agricultural goods and puts U.S. agriculture at a competitive disadvantage.
3. The bill will enhance the ability of Cuba to purchase U.S. farm goods by lifting restrictions on U.S. citizens traveling to Cuba. Texas A&M University estimates that lifting these travel restrictions alone will increase U.S. agricultural sales to Cuba in the long term by \$336 million per year, creating up to 5,500 new jobs. In addition, public

opinion polls show that about 64 percent of Americans<sup>1</sup> and two-thirds of Cuban-Americans<sup>2</sup> support the ability of U.S. citizens to freely travel to Cuba.

H.R. 4645 represents an opportunity to remove unjustified U.S. barriers to our own agricultural sector in order to increase the export competitiveness of U.S. agriculture products in Cuba. We urge you to support the bill as introduced by Chairman Collin Peterson (D-Minn.) and Rep. Jerry Moran (R-Kan.) without amendments.

Sincerely,

Alamar Associates  
Alliance of Baptists  
American Farm Bureau Federation  
American Soybean Association  
Arkansas Rice Federation  
Arkansas Rice Growers Association  
Bunge  
California Rice Commission  
Cargill  
Center for Cuban Studies  
Center for Democracy in the Americas  
Center for International Policy  
Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America  
Common Ground Education and Travel Services  
Corn Producers Association of Texas  
CubaPuentes  
Cuba Travel Services, Inc.  
Cuban American Commission for Family Rights  
Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc.  
Emergency Committee for American Trade  
Emergency Network of Cuban-American Scholars and Artists for Change in U.S.-Cuba Policy  
Foundation for Normalization of US/CUBA Relations  
Fund for Reconciliation and Development  
Greater Houston Partnership  
Illinois Corn Growers Association  
Illinois Farm Bureau  
Independent Cattlemen's Association of Texas  
Indiana Corn Growers Association  
Indiana Soybean Alliance

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<sup>1</sup> According to the CNN/Opinion Research Corp. poll conducted April 3-5, 2009, 64 percent of the 1,023 Americans surveyed by telephone thought the U.S. government should allow citizens to travel to Cuba. And 71 percent of those polled said that the U.S. should reestablish diplomatic relations with Cuba.

<sup>2</sup> According to the 2009 Bendixen & Associates poll, Two-thirds of Cuban and Cuban American adults - 67 percent - support the lifting of travel restrictions for all Americans so that they can also travel to Cuba freely.

Interactive Travel Services Association  
Iowa Corn Growers Association  
J Perez Associates, Inc  
Latin America Working Group  
Louis Dreyfus  
Louisiana Independent Rice Producers Association  
Louisiana Rice Growers Association  
Louisiana Rice Producers' Group  
Madison-Camaguey Sister City Association  
Maryland Farm Bureau  
Maryland Grain Producers Association  
Minnesota Corn Growers Association  
Mississippi Rice Council  
Missouri Corn Growers Association  
Missouri Rice Council  
Missouri Rice Producers' Group  
Molimar Export Consultants, Inc.  
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture  
National Association of Wheat Growers  
National Barley Growers Association  
National Chicken Council  
National Corn Growers Association  
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives  
National Farmers Union  
National Foreign Trade Council  
National Grain and Feed Association  
National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry  
National Milk Producers Federation  
National Oilseed Processors Association  
National Pork Producers Council  
National Sorghum Producers  
National Tour Association  
Nebraska Corn Board  
North American Export Grain Association  
North American Millers' Association  
Northwest Horticultural Council  
Ohio Corn Growers Association  
Ohio Wheat Growers Association  
Organization for International Investment  
Pet Food Institute  
Port Freeport  
Port of Corpus Christi  
Port of Galveston  
Port of Houston Authority  
Rice Producers of California  
Smithfield Foods

Texas Farm Bureau  
Texas Forestry Association  
Texas Grain Sorghum Producers Association  
Texas Rice Council  
Texas Rice Producers Legislative Group  
Texas Wheat Producers Association  
TriDimension Strategies, LLC  
United Motorcoach Association  
United States Council for International Business  
United States Dry Bean Council  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
US-Cuba Cultural Exchange  
U.S.-Cuba Sister Cities Association  
U.S. Dairy Export Council  
USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council  
USA Rice Federation  
US Rice Producers Association  
U.S. Women & Cuba Collaboration  
Washington Office on Latin America  
Washington State Potato Commission  
Western Growers Association  
Witness for Peace  
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom