



September 4, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear President Trump,

We commend you and your administration's efforts to ensure that the interests of American farmers are being addressed in the various areas of policy impacting U.S. agriculture. As the representative of some of the finest growers, packers and shippers of fruits, vegetables, and tree nuts in the world, I want to thank you for the efforts you have undertaken to streamline regulatory burdens and put forward an agenda that addresses many of the priorities we need addressed.

In July, you directed your U.S. Trade Representative to begin consultations under the U.S. – Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS). We would agree that there are certain aspects of that agreement and every trade relationship that can be improved and strengthened to better serve farmers across the country, whether within the text of these agreements or through other bilateral cooperation to facilitate greater exports of U.S. produce. Korea continues to maintain tariffs, tariff rate quotas, and phytosanitary barriers against various produce commodities, and they should continue to be pressed to address these barriers to trade.

However, even with ongoing issues to address in the trade relationship, the Korean market is a significant destination for many U.S. producers, particularly those on the west coast. In 2016, U.S. farmers exported nearly \$700 million in fruit, vegetable and tree nut commodities including: \$150 million of oranges, \$175 million of almonds, \$115 million of cherries, nearly \$100 million of walnuts, and \$28 million of table grapes.

Countries across Asia are among the greatest market opportunities for U.S. farmers, and we cannot afford any U.S. government actions that would back away from existing agreements. In fact, we need to build upon the opportunities already achieved and continue negotiating and implementing greater market access across the Pacific Rim. If the United States does not lead the way in opening and expanding market access in this region, other countries will be and in fact are already doing so, to the detriment of U.S. farmers and the rural economies they support across America.

I would strongly urge you to not withdraw from KORUS or any other existing trade agreement, the disruption that such actions would cause to the fresh produce industry would be devastating as growing decisions for many crops are made years in advance, based upon established trade relationships and customer loyalty. Once altered or abrogated, these relationships cannot be repaired quickly if ever.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "T. Nassif".

Ambassador Thomas A. Nassif
President and CEO, Western Growers

Cc:
Secretary Sonny Perdue, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Ambassador Robert Lighthizer, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative