

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 21, 2020

Chairman Jason E. Kearns
U.S. International Trade Commission
500 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20436

Dear Chairman Kearns:

We write today, as representatives of a leading blueberry producing state, in support of the Commission's ongoing Section 201 investigation regarding fresh, chilled, and frozen blueberries. The Michigan blueberry industry has a long history of being an international leader in blueberry production and quality, supporting hundreds of family farms and having a substantial impact on the state's economy. Unfortunately, local growers and processors are facing devastating consequences as a result of the surge in blueberry imports, strategically timed and priced to devastate and disrupt the domestic market.

Michigan produces nearly 100 million pounds of blueberries annually on more than 20,000 acres. Whether they are shipped to the fresh market, frozen, pureed, or concentrated, the industry contributes nearly \$130 million to our state's economy. However, it has become clear that family farms are facing undue hardship as a result of the recent influx of imports.

Recent data shows that U.S. imports of blueberries have increased significantly over the last 15 years. Over the last five years alone, blueberry imports have surged by over 62 percent from 423 million pounds in 2015 to 684 million pounds in 2019. The value of these imports has more than doubled since 2014, with five countries accounting for more than 98 percent of total imports over that time period. Since 2014, value of these imports from Peru have increased by over 3,500 percent and imports from Mexico have increased by nearly 300 percent. Imports from Canada and Chile also increased in value during this time. Considering the significant quantities of blueberry imports from multiple countries; a global safeguard investigation is a logical step to analyze the effect of imports from all countries and to gain a complete understanding of this global situation.

As these imports have increased, the price of blueberries has fallen to devastating lows and caused economic harm to growers, processors, and businesses in Michigan. Workers have been laid off and grower profits have declined or vanished as prices have plummeted and blueberries have been left on bushes because it is uneconomic to harvest. This hardship is threatening the livelihoods of Michigan family farmers, causing economic harm to providers of packing and freezing services, and damaging our economy at a community driven level. It is evident to us that the massive amounts of blueberries surging into the U.S. are crippling the domestic industry.

Thank you for your efforts to investigate these increased imports and the serious injury that they have caused farmers in Michigan. We urge you to consider duly all relevant information as you make your determination regarding the effects of increased blueberry imports on American families, growers, and processors, and provide relief to the domestic blueberry industry.

Sincerely,



Bill Huizenga
Member of Congress



Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress



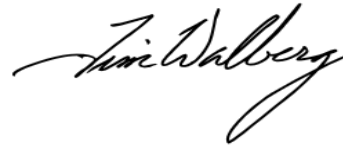
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