

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 3, 2009

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Congratulations on your confirmation as Secretary of Agriculture. We look forward to working with you on the broad range of issues that face the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and we wish you the best during your service in a crucial position.

Among your responsibilities will be the administration of U.S. sugar policy. USDA is charged both with administering the sugar price support program and with establishing the quantities of sugar imports that may enter the United States under Tariff Rate Quotas (TRQs) for raw and refined sugar.

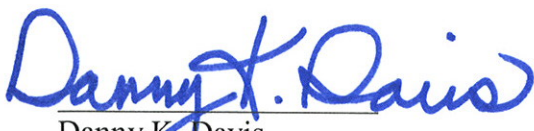
Presently, supplies of refined sugar are tight because of production shortfalls, strong demand, and the months-long closure of a major Southeast sugar refinery due to a tragic industrial accident. At the same time, a quota intended for refined sugar has actually been filled with raw sugar because of an anomaly in the U.S. tariff schedules, which has exacerbated the problems in the refined sugar market.

It seems clear that both the raw and refined sugar TRQs will need to be increased. USDA's own statements have recognized the need for more sugar supplies. Current USDA projections show that sugar supplies at the end of this year will be barely half of their normal levels.

We respectfully request that you act immediately to increase both the raw and refined TRQs, and take administrative action to ensure that all sugar entering the United States under the refined TRQ is, in fact, true refined sugar. We are aware of estimates that a total TRQ increase of at least 600,000 tons is needed in order to adequately supply the market.

Thank you for your consideration of our views, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



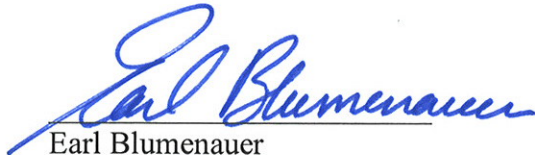
Mark Kirk
Member of Congress



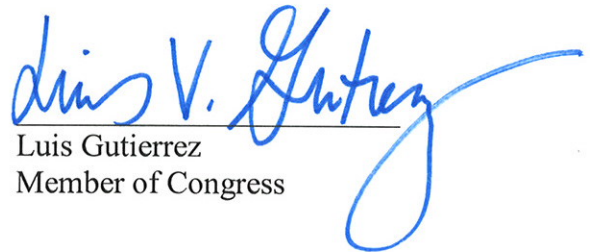
Scott Garrett
Member of Congress



Michael Castle
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



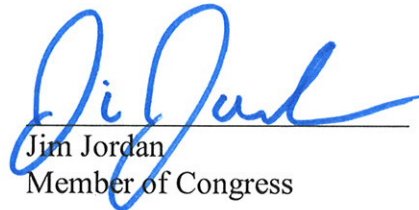
Luis Gutierrez
Member of Congress



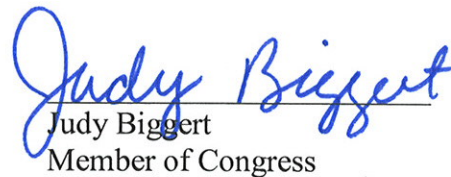
Marsha Blackburn
Member of Congress



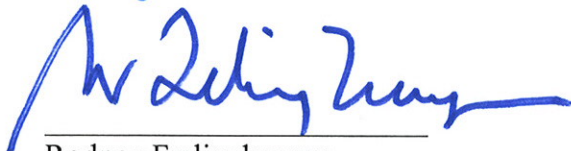
Melissa Bean
Member of Congress



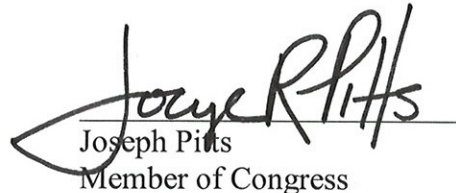
Jim Jordan
Member of Congress



Judy Biggert
Member of Congress



Rodney Frelinghuysen
Member of Congress



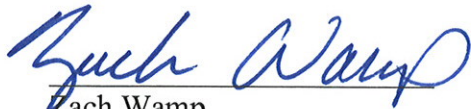
Joseph Pitts
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John Boozman
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Todd Platts
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Zach Wamp
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Jesse Jackson, Jr.
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Dan Lipinski
Member of Congress



Charles Dent
Member of Congress



Mark Souder
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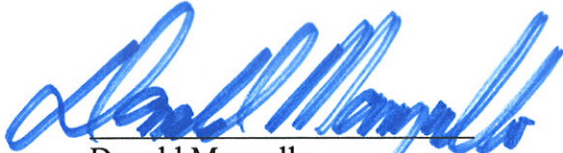
John Campbell
Member of Congress



Ellen Tauscher
Member of Congress



Jim Gerlach
Member of Congress



Donald Manzullo
Member of Congress