

November 27, 2023

President's Export Council
International Trade Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Members of The President's Export Council,

We are writing on behalf of the U.S. food and agriculture community to ask you to support this important President Export Council (PEC) proposal to bolster American agriculture's global competitive standing around the world.

Together, the proposal's recommendations provide guidance for the Administration to expand export markets opportunities for U.S. food and agriculture, eliminate unwarranted non-tariff barriers, and reinforce global food security.

U.S. agriculture is foundational to the American economy – reaching far beyond farms and rural communities to support more than 46 million jobs across the country.

The U.S. food and agriculture industries contributed \$2.61 trillion in total wages this past year and generated over \$8.6 trillion in total economic output. Key to its economic contributions and its sustainability, the food and agriculture sector exports about 20 percent of production. In 2022, American food and agriculture exports totaled nearly \$200 billion, providing jobs and economic opportunity throughout the supply chain in every corner and coast of the country.

Unfortunately, in 2023 we are experiencing a nine percent decline in the value of U.S. food and agricultural exports, and a 16 percent decline in volume. The latest forecast by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the 2023 marketing year predicts a food and agriculture trade **deficit** of \$17 billion, a stark contrast to the United States' historical trade surplus in agricultural exports, averaging \$12.5 billion over the past ten years.

While our two million U.S. farms and ranches are the backbone of America's food and ag sector, the impact of decreased exports and resulting economic fallout reverberates throughout the economy. More than twice as many Americans are manufacturing agricultural products as are manufacturing cars and trucks, and millions of food scientists, production workers, logistics experts, truck drivers, and engineers work in more than 200,000 food manufacturing, processing, and storage facilities. All in all, our industries are responsible for nearly 20 percent of the United States' economic activity.

In addition to its commercial exports, the United States plays an indispensable role in feeding millions around the world as the largest country donor of international food assistance.

With that in mind, we are asking the Council to support this proposal to bolster America's food and ag industries, and with it, the U.S. economy at large.

Specifically, this proposal asks PEC to:

- 1. Increase Collaboration on Diversifying the U.S. Agricultural Supply Chain** by urging the Administration to develop recommendations to diversify sourcing and/or incentivize cost effective U.S. production of ingredients such as fertilizers, vitamins, and chemicals to maintain U.S. agricultural production.
- 2. Establish a Robust Agricultural Trade Agenda**, comprising of a package of strategies including expanding domestic trade promotion programs, recommitting to comprehensive trade agreements where possible, and eliminating tariff and non-tariff trade barriers to enhance the ability of American producers to gain export market access and maintain competitiveness.
- 3. Enforce Existing Trade Agreements**, including through strengthening the World Trade Organization dispute resolution process and enforcing all U.S. free trade agreements.
- 4. Lead on International Sustainability and Climate Efforts** by urging the U.S. government to coalesce around a unified message on agricultural sustainability that focuses on voluntary, incentive-based programs to support sustainable productivity growth; keeps food accessible; supports climate-smart agricultural practices and provides additional market opportunities.

American agriculture is a global leader in sustainable production and innovative practices that enable us to feed a growing world population. Therefore, the trade barriers and setbacks that we've experienced this year do not only threaten our economic growth, but nutritional security around the world. Fortunately, the PEC and U.S. government has the infrastructure and resources to tackle these challenges, and it begins with the proposal that we've laid out above.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this proposal and for your leadership on the President's Export Council. We look forward to working together to restore U.S. agriculture exports, and build a stronger, more resilient U.S. agriculture industry and a better economy for all.

Sincerely,

American Farm Bureau Federation
American Feed Industry Association
American Seed Trade Association
American Soybean Association
Biotechnology Innovation Organization
Corn Refiners Association
Distilled Spirits Council
Farm Credit Council
Farmers for Free Trade
FMI – The Food Industry Association
Fresh Produce Association of the Americas
Global Cold Chain Alliance
Leather and Hide Council of America
Meat Import Council of America
Meat Institute
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Association of Wheat Growers

National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Grain & Feed Association
National Milk Producers Federation
National Oilseed Processors Association
National Pork Producers Council
National Sorghum Producers
National Turkey Federation
North American Export Grain Association
North American Millers' Association
Northwest Horticultural Council
U.S. Apple Association
U.S. Dairy Export Council
US Dry Bean Council
U.S. Pea & Lentil Trade Association
USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council
USA Rice