TO THE HONORABLE BARACK OBAMA, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, AND TO THE HONORABLE TOM VILSACK, SECRETARY OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE:

We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully represent and petition as follows:

WHEREAS, The agriculture and food industry, behind the production power of over thirty-seven thousand individual farms, is a forty-nine billion dollar industry employing approximately one hundred sixty thousand Washingtonians across all thirty-nine of the state's counties; and

WHEREAS, Washington farms grow over three hundred different commodities and Washington state leads the nation in the production of ten of those commodities including apples, pears, and sweet cherries; and

WHEREAS, Food processing alone employs approximately forty thousand people and makes Washington the United States leader in potato processing and apple juice manufacturing, and the second largest producer in the United States of premium wine; and

WHEREAS, Washington is a national leader in exporting food crops and feeding the world, exporting over fifteen billion dollars of agricultural products through Washington ports in 2013 alone; and

WHEREAS, International trade is vital to the economic health of Washington's agriculture industry, with wheat producers exporting up to ninety percent of their harvest, thirty percent of the state's apple harvest being exported, some dairies exporting nearly half of their entire output, twenty percent of all fresh produce being exported, and processed food such as french fries being sent from the state of Washington around the globe; and

WHEREAS, Given the global markets for Washington's agricultural bounty, it is vitally important for the agriculture and food industry to have reliable, affordable, efficient, and consistent access to ports for international trade; and

WHEREAS, Over the past two years, the inability of ports not only in Washington but down the west coast of the United States to reliably, affordably, efficiently, and consistently provide Washington's agricultural producers with access to global markets has had a significant and serious negative economic consequence for the agriculture and food industry; and

WHEREAS, Recent slowdowns in port efficiency has reduced overall nonaerospace Washington exports by nearly ten percent, and for some agricultural commodities such as wheat, french fries, forage products, and milk, closer to thirty percent; and

WHEREAS, The recent changes in port operations has affected not only food agriculture, but timber as well, with recent layoffs in the timber industry necessitated due to the inability of the timber industry to move processed products out of local ports; and

WHEREAS, The reductions in overall product exports does not take into account increased costs due to the necessity of air shipping, downward price movements forced by shipping delays, long-term damage to global markets as foreign buyers seek alternative suppliers, and the cascading effects in agricultural and timber communities as the thousands of direct and indirect jobs that rely on robust agricultural exports are jeopardized;

NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that the federal government generally, and the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture specifically, do everything in its ability to minimize the impacts of recent changes in port operations on Washington's agriculture, food, and timber industries, the individual Washingtonians who rely on those industries to feed, shelter, and educate their families, and the communities in which they live, and further, to take all necessary and prudent steps to return reliable, affordable, efficient, and consistent access for agriculture to the west coast ports.

BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately transmitted to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United States, the Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and each member of Congress from the State of Washington.