
HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 4005

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2015 Regular Session

By Representatives Dent, Springer, Manweller, Clibborn, Klippert, Sullivan, Short, Hawkins, Smith, MacEwen, Wilcox, McCaslin, Kretz, Wilson, Fagan, Walsh, Condotta, Harris, Chandler, Scott, Magendanz, Pettigrew, Haler, Moeller, Kagi, Orcutt, Hargrove, Griffey, Buys, and Carlyle

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

36 NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that the
37 federal government generally, and the Secretary of the United States
38 Department of Agriculture specifically, do everything in its ability
39 to minimize the impacts of recent changes in port operations on
40 Washington's agriculture, food, and timber industries, the individual

1 Washingtonians who rely on those industries to feed, shelter, and
2 educate their families, and the communities in which they live, and
3 further, to take all necessary and prudent steps to return reliable,
4 affordable, efficient, and consistent access for agriculture to the
5 west coast ports.

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

--- END ---