



MEMORANDUM:

Date: October 6, 2015

To: North Carolina Congressional Delegation
The Honorable Richard Burr
The Honorable Thom Tillis
The Honorable G.K. Butterfield, 1st District
The Honorable Renee Elmers, 2nd District
The Honorable Walter B. Jones, 3rd District
The Honorable David Price, 4th District
The Honorable Virginia Foxx, 5th District
The Honorable Mark Walker, 6th District
The Honorable David Rouzer, 7th District
The Honorable Richard Hudson, 8th District
The Honorable Robert Pittenger, 9th District
The Honorable Patrick McHenry, 10th District
The Honorable Mark Meadows, 11th District
The Honorable Alma Adams, 12th District
The Honorable George Holding, 13th District

From: Tim Yarbrough, President
Graham Boyd, Executive Vice President

Re: Trans Pacific Trade Partnership (TPP)

We have written to you and visited your congressional offices many times over the past several years to express concerns about the attempts to carve tobacco out of the TPP agreement. Thanks to the leadership efforts of so many of you we have been successful in preventing any adverse language until now.

Yesterday we learned that our own USTR actively pushed for and is responsible for including tobacco carve out language in the TPP agreement. This agreement was finalized over the weekend in Atlanta and was strategically placed as one of the very last issues to be decided. Throughout this entire process we understand that even yourselves as members of congress were denied preview of the specific language. It is alarming and un-American that for the first time in history the White House is actively working to discriminate against its own farmers in trade agreement negotiations. Our government is supposed to promote, protect and defend all of American agriculture. Shockingly our current trade ambassador has been very clear that he is more than happy to negotiate a Trans-Pacific Partnership that specifically discriminates against tobacco farm families and their rights to be included in free trade agreements.

This administration promised North Carolina's congressional delegation that they would not unfairly target tobacco growers in the TPP talks and we are profoundly disappointed to learn that this promise has been broken. If the White House truly believes they are standing up for the best interests of the thousands of farm

families and the industries that service their segment of the economy and community, then I invite them to have a real conversation with us and learn that we do not share their views.

Tobacco is our state's largest agricultural export and plays a vital role in promoting economic growth and prosperity. According to economists the TPP opportunity for tobacco could represent as much as a \$100 million in increased export opportunity for our farmers. We call on the administration to focus on promoting the best interests of the North Carolina agricultural community and urge our elected representatives in Washington to resist any trade agreement that treats North Carolina and all other American tobacco growers as second-class farmers.

Let us reemphasize that the only loser in this carve out will be the American farmer. The industry of "big tobacco" companies already manufacturers and sales products in the many regions of the world the TPP would encompass. The reality is that such products are, and will remain absent of our US grown leaf. Consumers will still maintain the choice to buy and use tobacco products constituted from leaf grown in other inferior regions of the world when compared to the quality and accountability of American grown tobacco under our government's agronomic and production standards.

Sadly, we read news articles that USTR is claiming the TPP to be a "good thing" for livestock and other segments of agriculture. However, it fails to ever mention tobacco at all. This is classic "bait and switch". It also displays picking "winners and losers" as Senator Tillis has pointed out from his remarks on the Senate floor. Every tobacco farmer operates a diversified business and thousands of them in NC also produce beef, poultry and swine which means they are part of the livestock segment of agriculture. Let me assure you that none of them supports advancing one commodity over another in a free trade agreement that should be equal and inclusive.

We respectfully call on the entire delegation to oppose the TPP as it stands and demand the removal of the tobacco language before it comes before congress. Our state and its economy deserve your support.

Thank you for your leadership on this matter. We look forward to informing our North Carolina citizens of your actions, and that our delegation places principles above politics.

CC:
The Honorable Pat McCrory, Governor of NC
The Honorable Steve Troxler, NC Commissioner of Agriculture