

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 8, 2017

The Honorable John M. Mulvaney
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20503

The Honorable Michael L. Young
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Director Mulvaney and Acting Secretary Young:

We urge a further stay of the rule that, if implemented, would permit Argentine lemons to re-enter the U.S. market. This rule was issued in late December by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), with an initial stay of 60 days issued on January 25, 2017. However, a further stay must be issued prior to March 27, when the rule is scheduled to take effect. If granted, this additional stay would allow for greater consideration of the proposed imports' impact on the American citrus industry.

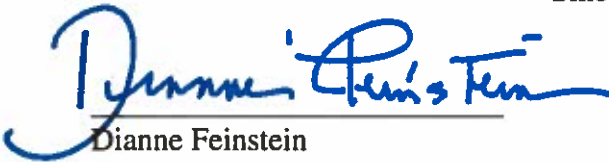
In contrast to the conclusions reached by USDA, outside economists estimate the rule's impact at upwards of \$261 million. As stated in USDA's rulemaking, "the majority of businesses that may be affected by the final rule are small entities, including lemon producers, packers, wholesalers, and related establishments." We therefore ask that you reconsider the appropriateness of reviewing the rule under Executive Order 12866, which requires assessment of all regulatory actions with an economic impact exceeding \$100 million annually.

Plant pests and diseases present in Argentina's lemon growing areas are substantial, including nine pests of quarantine significance identified by APHIS. American citrus growers—in conjunction with federal, state and local governments—are already fighting the threats posed by the Asian Citrus Psyllid and Huanglongbing disease at considerable expense. In keeping with our nation's trade obligations, every effort should be made to provide as close to zero risk as possible to U.S. citrus growers from the diseases and pests found in Argentina.

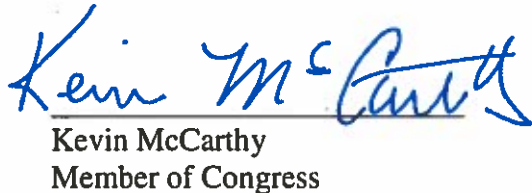
We also strongly encourage USDA to release additional information related to the in-country visit by APHIS inspectors to Argentine lemon growing areas in June 2015. We understand that information requested by domestic industry stakeholders, including the full summary or trip notes, has not yet been made available to the public. We hope that USDA will provide this information, as appropriate, in a timely manner. This information could prove helpful for state regulators, local agencies, and domestic growers working to safeguard against emerging plant pest and disease threats.

Based on these facts, we urge you to issue a further stay of the rule until these matters are addressed. Thank you for considering this time-sensitive request.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Kevin McCarthy
Member of Congress



Ken Calvert
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
Member of Congress



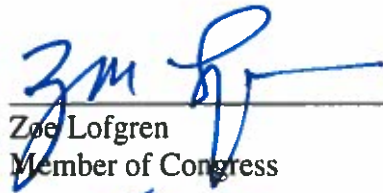
Steve Knight
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Jeff Denham
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



David G. Valadao
Member of Congress



Tom O'Halleran
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Devin Nunes
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