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September 13, 2016

Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20502-0001

Dear Mr. President:

I write today to voice my strong concerns regarding the proposed rule issued by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to allow the importation of Argentine lemons. As USDA is well aware, Argentina has a long history of devastating pest and disease issues that have kept Argentine lemons out of the U.S. market for decades.

Fifty percent of the U.S. lemon production comes from small- and medium-sized farms in my district in Southern California. These farmers are part of a domestic citrus industry that has been severely damaged by the introduction of foreign pests and diseases, yet USDA continues to rush this rule forward.

We must do our due diligence to ensure that the rulemaking concerns of our domestic interests are fully addressed. That's why on June 13, 2016, I joined with Senator Feinstein, Senator Boxer, and 15 bipartisan House colleagues in writing USDA to ask that it extend its comment period by an additional 120 days and properly revise its economic analysis, which currently relies on erroneous and arbitrary assumptions.

Although I was personally assured by USDA staff that our June 13 request would be taken seriously and that industry experts would have ample additional time for a thorough review, USDA did not honor that commitment. Instead, it announced a minimal extension and ignored industry and expert data indicating that the lemon industry could suffer from \$183 to \$261 million in economic harm, including large job losses, as a result of this action.

Many growers in my Congressional district have contacted me to express concerns that this rule is designed to benefit Argentina's lemon industry at the expense of U.S. producers, despite Argentina's long history of pest and disease issues. In order to restore rulemaking integrity to the process, I urge that before finalizing this rule the Administration undertake the specific remedial steps I outlined with my colleagues in our June 13 letter. This includes the announcement of an additional public comment period after USDA's September site visit to Argentina and the completion of the detailed economic analysis required under Section 6(a)(3)(c) of Executive Order 12866.

I hope you will stand with me and America's farmers. Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

JULIA BROWNLEY
Member of Congress