

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 7, 2011

The Honorable Ron Kirk
United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20508

Dear Ambassador Kirk:

We write to express our strong opposition to requests to exclude products, specifically tobacco, from the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) negotiations. Excluding specific products from the TPPA could have a serious impact on future trade agreement negotiations and significantly damage Kentucky's economy.

It is our understanding that those seeking to exclude specific products from the TPPA base their request on the Doggett Amendment. This is a misinterpretation of the Doggett Amendment that could set a dangerous precedent for future trade negotiations.

The Doggett Amendment does not require the United States to carve tobacco out of free trade agreements. Inclusion of tobacco in a comprehensive trade agreement does not fall within the definitions of "promotion" or "marketing" as those terms are used in the Doggett Amendment. In fact, it is important to note that tobacco products were not excluded from eleven of the trade agreements negotiated since the adoption of the Doggett Amendment.

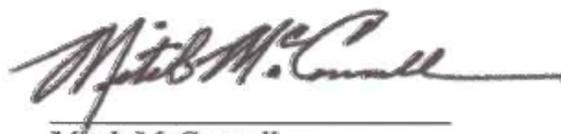
We also have concerns that excluding tobacco from the TPPA could set a precedent for other industries and future trade negotiations. We have already heard concerns that the exclusion of alcohol and dairy products is under consideration. Excluding tobacco from the TPPA would establish a broad and possibly economically debilitating precedent potentially applicable to any industry.

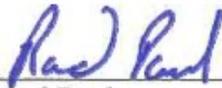
Kentucky is one of the largest tobacco producing States with tobacco leaf production supporting thousands of jobs across the Commonwealth. As over eighty percent of tobacco grown in Kentucky is exported to other countries, the exclusion of tobacco products from the TPPA threatens our growers' business and could harm the communities where they live and employ Kentuckians.

At a time when Kentucky's unemployment rate hovers near 9.5 percent we urge you to consider the serious impact excluding tobacco will have on the Commonwealth and the national economy. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Geoff Davis
Member of Congress

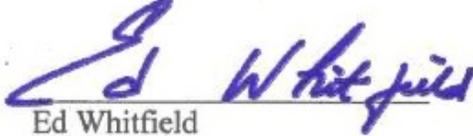

Mitch McConnell
U.S. Senator



Rand Paul
U.S. Senator



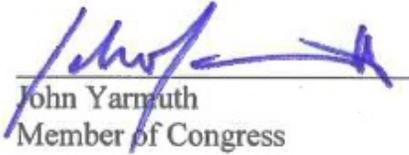
Harold Rogers
Member of Congress



Ed Whitfield
Member of Congress



Ben Chandler
Member of Congress



John Yarmuth
Member of Congress



Brett Guthrie
Member of Congress



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
December 14, 2011

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Tobacco Growers Warn Obama Administration of Economic Costs of Excluding Them from Trans-Pacific Partnership

LEXINGTON, KY – The Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association called on the Obama Administration today to defend the economic interests of farm families in the United States by ensuring that tobacco and tobacco products are not excluded from the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA). Excluding tobacco and tobacco products from the tariff reductions as well as from protections on intellectual property rights and investments would have a negative impact on tobacco farmers, resulting in lost opportunities, jobs and income. The TPPA is a comprehensive regional trade agreement currently being negotiated among the United States, Australia, Brunei, Chile, Malaysia, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam. Tobacco has traditionally been included in U.S. trade agreements.

“If the Obama Administration turns its back on American tobacco growers by excluding us from this important agreement, there will be severe economic consequences in several states, said Roger Quarles, the president of the Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association. “Jobs are at stake for tobacco growers and communities, and we will be watching the Obama Administration’s actions very closely as the negotiations on the TPPA continue.”

The Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association’s message to the Obama Administration comes at a time when lawmakers on Capitol Hill are taking a closer look at the TPPA process. Today, the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Trade will hold a hearing on the TPPA at which the Office of the United States Trade Representative will testify.

Quarles noted that a large bipartisan group of lawmakers in Congress from several states where tobacco farming is a major source of jobs have written to the Obama Administration urging that tobacco leaf and products not be excluded from the TPPA. Copies of those letters are attached to this press release.

“Our elected officials in Washington have expressed their strong opposition to a tobacco carve out in the TPP because of the negative impact it would have on jobs in their states,” Quarles continued.

“Tobacco growers have become more dependent on exports just as other farmers have in the global marketplace. We simply must have fair access to foreign markets to remain competitive in today’s economy. Excluding tobacco leaf and tobacco products from the TPP will do nothing to promote public health in these countries, will destroy agriculture jobs in states like Virginia, North Carolina, Ohio and Missouri. It will also set a dangerous precedent for future trade deals that will place American agriculture jobs at greater risk of being destroyed for no good reason,” Quarles concluded.

The Burley Tobacco Growers Cooperative Association is the preeminent advocacy organization representing the interests of burley growers in the United States.