

DAN BENISHEK M.D.
FIRST DISTRICT, MICHIGAN



COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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November 5, 2013

The Honorable Frank Lucas
Chairman
House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Collin Peterson
Ranking Member
House Committee on Agriculture
1305 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Conferees:

As you continue to develop final legislative language for the 2013 Farm Bill over the coming weeks, I appreciate your willingness to work with all stakeholders—from small family farmers to food safety advocates to the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA)—to ensure that our food supply remains both safe and economically viable.

As you are aware, Section 12321 of H.R. 2642 requires a scientific and economic analysis of the FDA's Food Safety Modernization Act. As a doctor for the last 30 years, I agree that food safety is vitally important and that we should only focus on strengthening the current system. However, I remain concerned that our nation's farmers and producers would be subjected to burdensome regulatory actions that are duplicative in practice and do not take into account the different practices utilized by farmers that are already subject to government regulation and oversight.

The FDA continues to finalize rules that will administer the growing, harvesting, packing and holding of fresh produce. Throughout this process, I have worked with local farmers and processors in my district, as well as the FDA to ensure that their concerns regarding these new rules are heard. I have also hosted FDA officials in Michigan so they could see firsthand how hard our farmers work to protect the food that goes on our kitchen tables. As you continue the legislative process, please keep in mind that a "one-size-fits-all" approach will likely not accommodate all farmers and producers across our vast and varied nation or enhance food safety. I urge you to continue to consult with all stakeholders, keeping a balanced approach that will protect our food supply and is economically viable.

Again, I appreciate the work you are doing to resolve the differences between the House and Senate versions of the Farm Bill and the work towards the shared goal of ensuring a safe and healthy food supply for the American people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dan Benishek".

Dan Benishek M.D.
Member of Congress
Michigan's First District

cc: Hon. Steve King, Hon. Mike McIntyre, Hon. Ed Royce, Hon. Eliot Engle, Hon. Dave Camp, Hon. Sandy Levin, Hon. Randy Neugebauer, Hon. Jim Costa, Hon. Mike Rogers (AL), Hon. Tim Walz, Hon. K. Michael Conaway, Hon. Kurt Schrader, Hon. Glen "GT" Thompson, Hon. Jim McGovern, Hon. Austin Scott, Hon. Suzan DelBene, Hon. Rick Crawford, Hon, Gloria Negrete McLeod, Hon. Martha Roby, Hon. Filemon Vela, Hon. Jeff Denham, Hon. Marcia Fudge, Hon. Rodney Davis, Hon. Sam Johnson, Hon. Steve Southerland, Hon. Tom Marion