



August 3, 2012

Dear California Congressional Delegation:

I am writing to express our opposition to the King Amendment to H.R. 6083, *The Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act of 2012*. California has thoroughly analyzed the King Amendment and while questions remain as to the breadth of its reach, it is clear that the effects of the Amendment are far broader than the stated purpose of opposition to California's efforts to enforce its egg food safety and consumer expectations. The Amendment is not limited to California; it would have similar effects across the nation. In addition to the significant threat that this amendment places on our nation's food supply, it also severely undermines states' rights.

As the nation's largest agricultural producer and exporter, California plays a vital role in ensuring the nation's security and economic strength. With more than 400 different agricultural commodities, California's farms and ranches are necessary to feed and clothe the nation and the world. In fact, 50% of all fruits and vegetables consumed in the U.S. are from California. Protecting California's food is an investment in our nation's future.

As drafted, the King Amendment would invalidate many California phytosanitary requirements that are intended to prevent the entrance of invasive species and diseases that destroy crops and natural resources and it would conflict with *Plant Protection Act*, 7 U.S.C. Section 7756(b)(2)(B), by denying the federal government the flexibility to consider a state's request to implement higher standards even when justified. Because of California's abundance of crops, hospitable weather and significant national and international trade, the state faces significant threats from these invasives. For example, just one invasive pest, the Asian citrus psyllid, and the disease it vectors, Huanglongbing, for which there is no cure, has the potential to completely destroy our \$1.8 billion citrus industry. In one recent study in Florida, the presence of Huanglongbing increased citrus production costs by 40%. The King Amendment would severely hamper a California's ability to address these threats, putting the nation's food supply at risk.

In addition to its impact on invasive pest programs, the King amendment would severely hamper California's food safety requirements and standards. For instance, it would invalidate dairy pasteurization requirements, egg quality and safety standards, bacterial, somatic cell and coliform standards, and pathogen standards placed on the importation of aquatic plants and



animals, It would also impact California's livestock and poultry disease prevention efforts, including Tuberculosis testing requirements, Brucellosis vaccination requirements, and poultry health entry requirements designed to prevent an incident like Exotic Newcastle's Disease. Additionally, it would threaten our State Veterinarian's Quarantine authority.

In addition to the broad implications to the agricultural sector, the King Amendment also negatively impacts any state's efforts to protect its lands and natural resources. With its sweeping nature, this amendment creates a risk to California's aquatic resources due to lack of pathogen surveillance on importation of aquatic plants and animals. Additionally, the amendment may limit California's ability to restrict importation of animals that we consider detrimental to our environment. Furthermore, this amendment is problematic for our forest products industry and efforts to prevent pests impacting these products. Firewood is a major vector of highly damaging invasive insects and California strongly wishes to retain our ability to require imported firewood to be heat treated to kill pests that have the potential to destroy our natural resources.

The amendment also has the potential to impact other programs, such as our feed inspection standards, fruit and vegetable quality standards, shellfish safety, organic inputs, and, possibly, labeling requirements. For instance, in the ongoing effort to minimize food safety risks, California adopted stringent aflatoxin standards; aflatoxins are known to be human carcinogens that readily transfer to milk when feed inclusion levels exceed the threshold ability level for the liver to detoxify the metabolites feed safety standards. California is committed to ensuring food safety.

California and its stakeholders share the vision that the Farm Bill needs to ensure a safe and secure food supply, create jobs, support better health and well-being, protect natural resources and the environment, promote thriving communities, and revitalize our food and farming system. As the largest, most diverse agricultural producer in the nation, California faces significant risks that are not faced in other states. We must retain the ability to protect the nation's food supply against these threats. The King amendment would undermine these efforts.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you would like to discuss any of this, please do not hesitate to call me at 916-654-0433.

Yours truly,



Karen Ross

Secretary