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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Committee on Ways and Means

March 27, 2007

The Honorable Susan C. Schwab
Ambassador
Office of the U.S. Trade Representative
600 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20508

The Honorable Mike Johanns
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
14th & Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Ambassador Schwab and Secretary Johanns:

I am writing to urge the restoration of full market access for beef prior to the conclusion of Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations with Korea. Despite the overwhelming scientific evidence supporting the safety of U.S. beef, more than 17 years of BSE controls, a preliminary expert panel designation, and an agreement to restore trade, the ban persists.

After fourteen months of unsuccessful negotiations regarding an incremental reopening for beef, and in the midst of FTA negotiations, Members of Congress continued to be frustrated by the lack of progress. As recently as March 12, 2007, a World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) expert panel recommended a preliminary designation for the U.S. of a "Controlled Risk" country for BSE. This designation affirms the U.S.' proactive and effective commitment to preventing BSE and controlling it, should it occur. Under such a designation, U.S. cattle and products from cattle of all ages can be safely traded in accordance with international guidelines, due to our interlocking safeguards.

Of late, the negotiations have resulted in little progress on the core issues and a refusal to resolve outstanding problems in our bilateral relationship. At the Ways and Means Trade Subcommittee hearing on the status of the U.S. – South Korea Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations, Deputy USTR Bhatia stated that USTR has communicated to the Korean officials that Congress will not approve an FTA that was not open to U.S. beef.

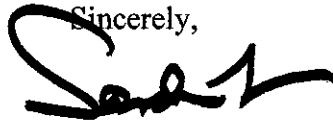
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I completely agree with this view. The FTA must include the resumption of full market access to U.S. beef prior to the conclusion of the FTA negotiations.

As USTR is the advocate for U.S. businesses and workers in these negotiations, and given the transmittal of the *Bipartisan Congressional Proposal to Open Korea's Automotive Markets*, I also would urge that you make clear to your Korean counterparts that the same Congressional view applies to our gaining full and measurable access to the Korean Automotive market.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sander M. Levin". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a large initial "S" and a long, sweeping tail.

Sander M. Levin
Chairman
Ways & Means Trade Subcommittee

cc:

Ambassador Richard Crowder
Undersecretary of Agriculture, Charles Lambert
Undersecretary of Agriculture Mark Keenum