

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 18, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to call attention to the ongoing economic struggles of thousands of American cotton farming families across the country and their need for an effective safety net. Without some action by the Federal government, these families will continue to see their equity erode or take on a greater debt load as they hope to keep their family farms in operation.

In the past decade, American cotton farmers have had to endure sharply increasing foreign subsidies, tariffs, and non-tariff trade barriers along with multiple years of significant weather-related crop losses, all under a significantly weakened and uncertain U.S. safety net. In recent years, these factors have resulted in the United States experiencing a 30-year low in cotton planted area; global cotton prices approaching \$2.00 per pound before plummeting to as low as 57 cents per pound; and record production costs far outpacing market returns for the last 3 years.

As a consequence, America's cotton farming families are struggling to compete on a lopsided global playing field heavily weighted to our competitors in countries like China and India that benefit from sharply rising government subsidies.

In addition, the safety net for American cotton farmers is not on par with the safety net for other staple crop farmers, meaning cotton farmers are much more exposed to the predatory trade practices of foreign countries. This impact on our country's cotton farmers is also severely impacting the U.S. cotton industry's infrastructure that includes not only farms but also gins, warehouses, marketing cooperatives, merchants, cottonseed processors, merchandisers, and textile manufacturers across the 17-state Cotton Belt from Virginia to California. For example, over the past decade, the numbers of businesses involved in the ginning and warehousing of cotton have declined by 33 and 21 percent, respectively. It is imperative that we protect the remaining 20,000 businesses in this industry that employ 126,000 people and generate over \$21 billion in revenue or America risks losing this important sector of our economy in the same way we lost much of our textile industry, once the largest part of the U.S. manufacturing sector.

Mr. President, in an effort to help stabilize the entire industry, we strongly urge you to use your authority to operate on an ongoing basis the Cotton Ginning Cost Share Program effective beginning with the 2016 crop year. The cost share program, administered by the Department of Agriculture, is desperately needed to provide policy stability in the absence of a comprehensive policy for cotton farmers in the existing farm bill to effectively respond to sustained and deep economic losses due

to price and revenue declines. This cost share program was operated by the previous Administration for the 2015 crop year and is an effective and efficient means of providing economic relief to America's cotton farming families.

Mr. President, we respectfully urge you to take this critical action and we stand ready to work with you, the Department of Agriculture, and the industry to address this important need as quickly as possible.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,



Chairman K. Michael Conaway (TX-11)
Committee on Agriculture



Ranking Member Collin C. Peterson (MN-07)
Committee on Agriculture



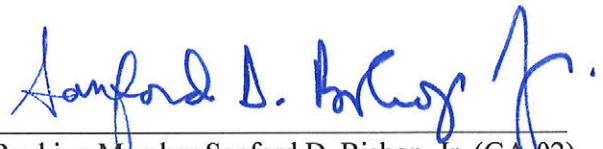
Chairman Rick Crawford (AR-01)
Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities
and Risk Management, Committee on Agriculture



Ranking Member Richard M. Nolan (MN-08)
Subcommittee on General Farm Commodities
and Risk Management, Committee on Agriculture



Chairman Robert B. Aderholt (AL-04)
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug Administration,
and Related Agencies, Committee on Appropriations



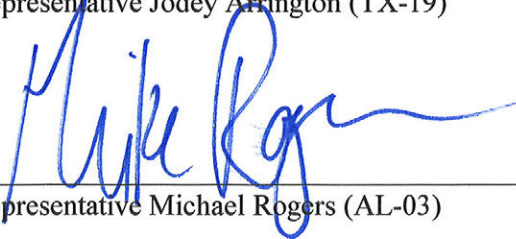
Ranking Member Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. (GA-02)
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug Administration,
and Related Agencies, Committee on Appropriations



Representative Jodey Arrington (TX-19)



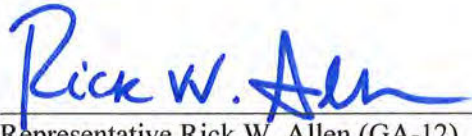
Representative Tom O'Halleran (AZ-01)



Representative Michael Rogers (AL-03)



Representative Ted S. Yoho, D.V.M. (FL-03)



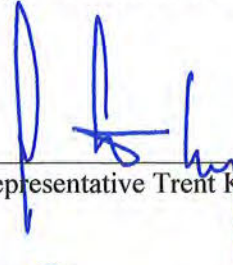
Representative Rick W. Allen (GA-12)



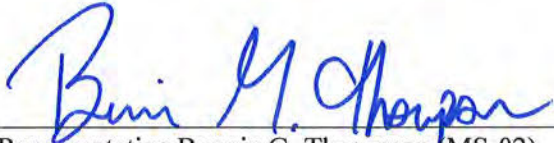
Representative David Scott (GA-13)



Representative Ralph Abraham, M.D. (LA-05)



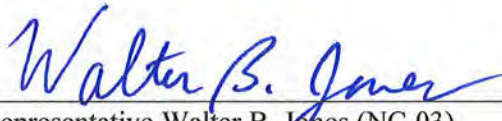
Representative Trent Kelly (MS-01)



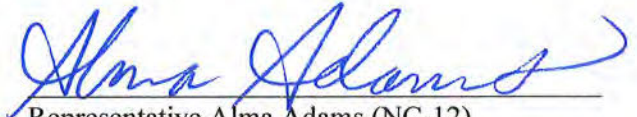
Representative Bennie G. Thompson (MS-02)



Representative Gregg Harper (MS-03)



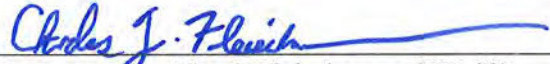
Representative Walter B. Jones (NC-03)



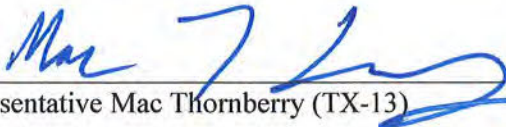
Representative Alma Adams (NC-12)



Representative Kevin Cramer (ND-At Large)



Representative Chuck Fleischmann (TN-03)



Representative Mac Thornberry (TX-13)



Representative Blake Farenthold (TX-27)



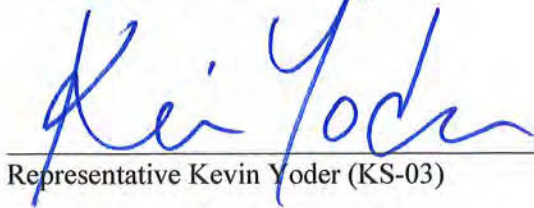
Representative Vicente Gonzalez (TX-15)



Representative Martha Roby (AL-02)



Representative Earl L. "Buddy" Carter (GA-01)



Representative Kevin Yoder (KS-03)



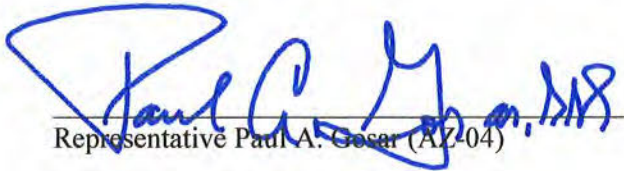
Representative David Rouzer (NC-07)




Representative Roger Marshall, M.D. (KS-01)


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Representative G. K. Butterfield (NC-01)


Representative Paul A. Gosar (AZ-04)


Representative Austin Scott (GA-08)


Representative Garret Graves (LA-06)


Representative David Kustoff (TN-08)

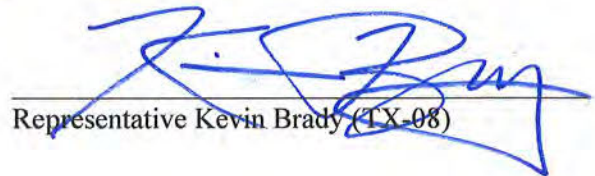

Representative Jason Smith (MO-08)


Representative Vicky Hartzler (MO-04)

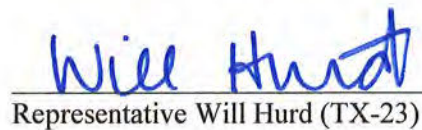

Representative Kyrsten Sinema (AZ-09)


Representative Jody Hice (GA-10)

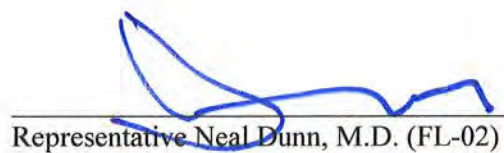

Representative Tom Cole (OK-04)

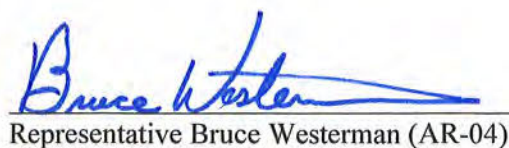

Representative Kevin Brady (TX-08)

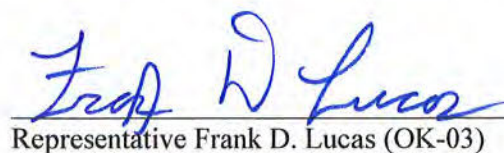

Representative Glenn 'GT' Thompson (PA-05)


Representative Will Hurd (TX-23)


Representative Filemon Vela (TX-34)

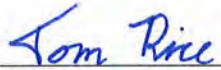

Representative Neal Dunn, M.D. (FL-02)



Representative Bruce Westerman (AR-04)


Representative Frank D. Lucas (OK-03)



Representative Bill Flores (TX-17)


Representative Pete Sessions (TX-32)

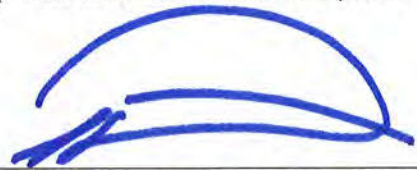

Representative Tom Rice (SC-07)


Representative Gene Green (TX-29)


Representative Adam Kinzinger (IL-16)



Representative Terri A. Sewell (AL-07)

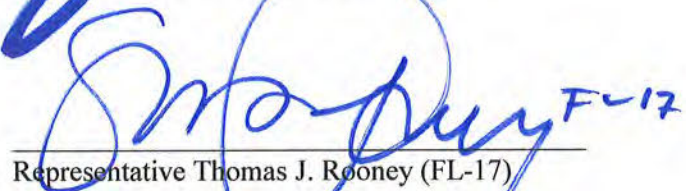

Representative Jeff Denham (CA-10)


Representative Scott DesJarlais, M.D. (TN-04)



Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson (TX-30)



Representative John Carter (TX-31)


Representative A. Drew Ferguson, IV DMD (GA-03)

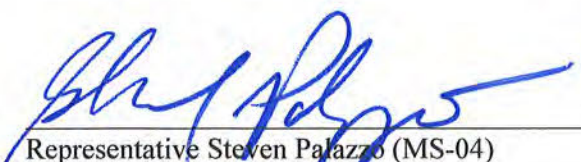

Representative Thomas J. Rooney (FL-17)


Representative French Hill (AR-02)

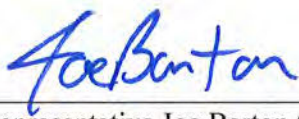

Representative Michelle Lujan Grisham (NM-01)


Representative Stephen Womack (AR-03)


Representative Bradley Byrne (AL-01)


Representative Steven Palazzo (MS-04)

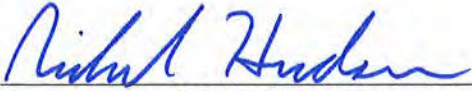

Representative Ted Poe (TX-02)



Representative Joe Barton (TX-06)



Representative Kenny Marchant (TX-24)



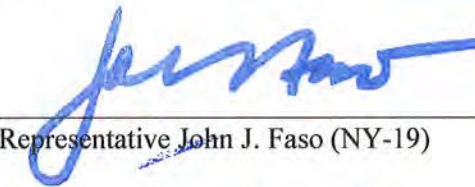
Representative Richard Hudson (NC-08)



Representative Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (VA-03)



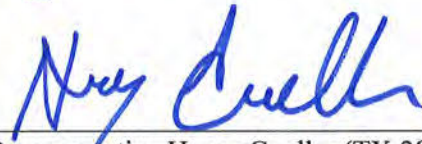
Representative Trent Franks (AZ-08)



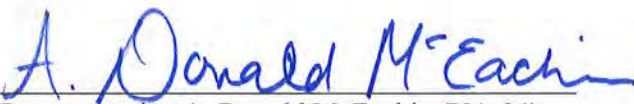
Representative John J. Faso (NY-19)



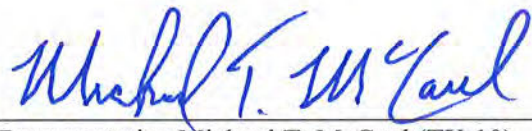
Representative John Ratcliffe (TX-04)



Representative Henry Cuellar (TX-28)



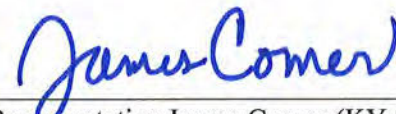
Representative A. Donald McEachin (VA-04)



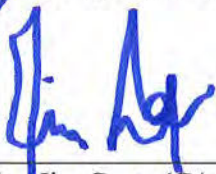
Representative Michael T. McCaul (TX-10)



Representative Doug Collins (GA-09)



Representative James Comer (KY-01)



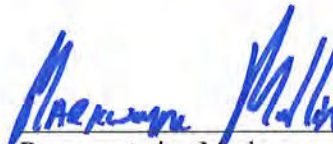
Representative Jim Costa (CA-16)



Representative Marsha Blackburn (TN-07)



Representative Doug LaMalfa (CA-01)



Representative Markwayne Mullin (OK-02)



Representative Lamar Smith (TX-21)



Representative Pete Olson (TX-22)

Beto O'Rourke.

Representative Beto O'Rourke (TX-16)

Clay Higgins

Representative Clay Higgins (LA-03)

George Holding

Representative George Holding (NC-02)

Kay Granger

Representative Kay Granger (TX-12)

Devin Nunes

Representative Devin Nunes (CA-22)

MIKE JOHNSON

Representative Mike Johnson (LA-04)

John Rutherford

Representative John Rutherford (FL-04)

Robert Pittenger

Representative Robert Pittenger (NC-09)

Cedric L. Richmond

Representative Cedric L. Richmond (LA-02)

Diane Black

Representative Diane Black (TN-06)

Tom Graves

Representative Tom Graves (GA-14)

David Price

Representative David Price (NC-04)

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.

Representative Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr. (GA-04)

Randy K. Weber

Representative Randy Weber (TX-14)

Steve Pearce

Representative Steve Pearce (NM-02)

Barry Loudermilk

Representative Barry Loudermilk (GA-11)

Brian Babin

Representative Brian Babin, D.D.S. (TX-36)

Ralph Norman

Representative Ralph Norman (SC-05)



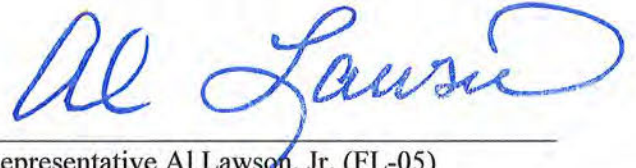
Representative Mo Brooks (AL-05)



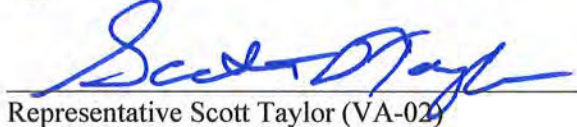
Representative Roger Williams (TX-25)



Representative Patrick McHenry (NC-10)



Representative Al Lawson, Jr. (FL-05)



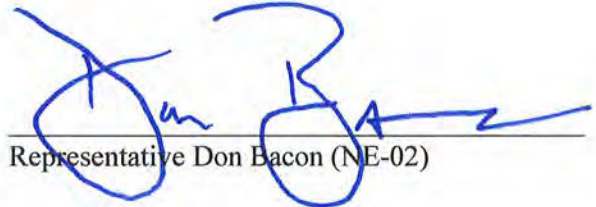
Representative Scott Taylor (VA-02)



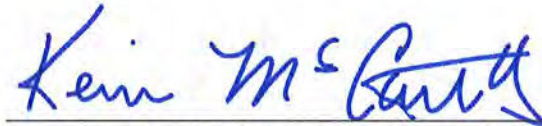
Representative Rob Woodall (GA-07)



Representative Joe Wilson (SC-02)



Representative Don Bacon (NE-02)



Representative Kevin McCarthy (CA-23)

CC: The Honorable Sonny Perdue, United States Secretary of Agriculture