

November 17, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

Thank you for your leadership at the 26<sup>th</sup> United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) and for your administration's efforts to position agriculture and innovation as a solution to global climate and sustainability challenges. The undersigned organizations represent America's highly innovative and competitive agricultural value chain that is committed to empowering agriculture and food systems to mitigate and adapt to climate change, with science-based, environmentally, and economically sound solutions that also provide for food security.

As you continue to advance America's leadership on climate, we ask for your attention to acute and systemic trade barriers to innovative agricultural biotechnology tools in important export markets. Specifically, we have great concerns regarding the Government of Mexico's policy on agricultural biotechnology that is out of step with its commitments under the United States – Mexico – Canada Agreement (USMCA) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). As you approach the North American Leaders Summit, we ask that you address Mexico's approach to agricultural biotechnology, and specifically to encourage President López Obrador to reestablish a timely, science-based regulatory process and reaffirm the Government of Mexico's commitment to bilateral trade in agricultural products produced with biotechnology. Should this engagement not succeed, the only remaining path will be to utilize the new enforcement tools included under USMCA. In addition, we underscore the importance of restoring more predictable and USMCA-compliant trading conditions across a range of other U.S. agricultural exports that are increasingly burdened by Mexico's use of unscientific regulatory measures to impede trade.

Since 2018, Mexico has failed to maintain a science-based approval process for agricultural biotechnology, by arbitrarily delaying the scientific risk assessment of biotechnology products, and in one recent instance rejecting a biotech corn product application without scientific justification. As a result, Mexico's lack of a valid and reliable regulatory process has become a rate limiting step to approval and a barrier to introducing new biotechnology crops in North America. The queue of products awaiting science-based risk assessment continues to grow, affecting twenty-five technologies across a wide range of commodities – apples, canola, corn, cotton, and soybeans.

Compounding matters, the Government of Mexico has issued a series of vague and often contradictory statements as to how imports of U.S. grain produced with agricultural biotechnology are to be treated. A recent letter from President López Obrador to you on October 26, 2021, continues to add to the uncertainty. The absence of a science-based, timely and transparent process, the recent biotechnology product rejection, and messaging from the Government of Mexico are, in part and in whole, raising substantial concern for the U.S. agricultural value chain as they have the potential to reduce sales of U.S. agricultural products and undermine long term commercial relationships.

Mexico's actions related to agricultural biotechnology are without scientific rationale and misplaced. For over twenty years, the United States has successfully and safely led the world in the commercialization of biotechnology to enable more sustainable farming practices. These innovations reduce greenhouse gas emissions throughout agricultural supply chains, delivering environmentally friendly products and processes to the market and more nutritious offerings to all tables. Future technologies will be critical for producers around the world to be resilient and adaptive to pests, diseases, and extreme weather brought on by climate change.

We greatly appreciate Ambassador Tai and Secretary Vilsack's consistent engagement on these matters. However, we are growing increasingly alarmed as the Government of Mexico has yet to acknowledge U.S. government intervention and articulate a path to compliance. We are concerned that without intervention at the highest-level, Mexico will continue to deny applicants a timely, science-based process and potentially move forward with actions to ban imports of U.S. grains.

Failing to hold Mexico accountable will undermine our efforts to tackle climate change, worsen food insecurity, negatively impact our food systems and the supply chain, and harm the livelihoods of agricultural producers in both the United States and Mexico. Further, if Mexico's actions go unchecked it could embolden other trading partners to take similar actions.

To enable agriculture to address the challenges related to climate change and sustainably increase production to feed a growing world will require producers having access to cutting edge biotechnology tools and predictable, reliable cross border trade and investment. Unfortunately, Mexico's political and regulatory practices are already having negative impacts on decision making throughout the global agricultural supply chain. As such, it is critical the United States takes decisive action to remove Mexico's impediments to agricultural innovation.

Sincerely,

American Farm Bureau Federation  
Agricultural Retailers Association  
Alabama Soybean & Corn Association  
American Feed Industry Association  
American Seed Trade Association  
American Soybean Association  
Arizona Bioindustry Association (AZBio)  
Arizona Farm Bureau  
Biocom California  
BioCT  
BioKansas  
Bio Nebraska  
BioNJ  
Biotechnology Innovation Organization  
California Farm Bureau  
California Life Sciences  
Colorado BioScience Association  
Corn Refiners Association  
CropLife International  
Delaware Farm Bureau  
Far West Agribusiness Association  
Florida Feed Association, Inc.

Florida Fertilizer & Agrichemical Association  
Georgia Bio  
Grain and Feed Association of Illinois  
Idaho Farm Bureau Federation  
Illinois Biotechnology Innovation Organization, iBIO  
Illinois Corn Growers Association  
Illinois Fertilizer and Chemical Association  
Indiana Corn Growers Association  
Indiana Farm Bureau  
Indiana Health Industry Forum  
Indiana Soybean Alliance  
Iowa Biotechnology Association  
Iowa Corn Growers Association  
Iowa Farm Bureau  
Kansas Corn Growers Association  
Kansas Farm Bureau  
Kansas Grain and Feed Association  
Kentucky Corn Growers Association  
Kentucky Life Sciences Council  
Louisiana Cotton & Grain Association  
Louisiana Farm Bureau Federation  
Maryland Grain Producers Association  
Michigan Biosciences Industry Association (MichBio)  
Michigan Corn Growers Association  
Michigan Farm Bureau  
Minnesota Corn Growers Association  
Minnesota Crop Production Retailers  
Minnesota Farm Bureau  
Minnesota Grain and Feed Association  
Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation  
Missouri Biotechnology Association (MOBIO)  
Missouri Corn Growers Association  
Missouri Farm Bureau  
Missouri Soybean Association  
Montana Agricultural Business Association  
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture  
National Cattlemen's Beef Association  
National Corn Growers Association  
National Cotton Council  
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives  
National Grain and Feed Association  
National Milk Producers Federation  
National Oilseed Processors Association  
Nebraska Corn Growers Association  
Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation  
New Mexico Biotechnology & Biomedical Association  
New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau  
New York Corn and Soybean Growers Association  
New York Farm Bureau  
NewYorkBIO  
North American Export Grain Association

North American Meat Institute  
North American Millers' Association  
North Carolina Agribusiness Council, Inc  
North Carolina Biosciences Organization (NCBIO)  
North Carolina Farm Bureau  
North Dakota Bioscience Association  
North Dakota Corn Growers Association  
North Dakota Grain Growers Association  
Northern Canola Growers Association  
Ohio AgriBusiness Association  
Ohio Corn & Wheat Growers Association  
Ohio Farm Bureau Federation  
Ohio Soybean Association  
Oregon Bio  
Oregon Feed and Grain Association  
Oregon Seed Association  
Pacific Northwest Canola Association  
Pennsylvania Corn Growers Association  
Pennsylvania Farm Bureau  
Rocky Mountain Agribusiness Association  
Rural & Agriculture Council of America  
South Dakota Agri-Business Association  
South Dakota Biotech  
South Dakota Corn Growers Association  
Tennessee Corn Growers Association  
Tennessee Feed & Grain Association  
Texas Corn Producers Association  
Texas Farm Bureau  
Texas Grain and Feed Association  
Texas Soybean Association  
United Fresh Produce Association  
U.S. Canola Association  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
U.S. Dairy Export Council  
U.S. Grains Council  
Virginia Grain Producers Association  
Western Plant Health Association  
Wisconsin Agri-Business Association  
Wisconsin Corn Growers Association  
Wyoming Ag Business Association

Cc: The Honorable Katherine Tai, Ambassador, U.S. Trade Representative  
The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture  
The Honorable Gina Raimondo, Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce  
The Honorable Antony Blinken, Secretary, U.S. Department of State  
The Honorable John Kerry, U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Climate  
The Honorable Jake Sullivan, National Security Advisor