



JIMMY PARNELL
PRESIDENT

June 4, 2015

The Honorable Bradley Byrne
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Byrne:

As debate on Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) moves to the U.S. House, it is appropriate to consider how a robust trade economy impacts farmers and agricultural industries in Alabama. This vote will no doubt be a contentious one, but it is imperative that the United States continues to be a player in agricultural trade around the world. H.R. 1314, the *Bipartisan Congressional Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015*, is a way to keep us moving forward on trade negotiations that are currently underway. The Alabama Farmers Federation is counting on your leadership to ensure the United States remains strong, and we have a fair trade agreement for Alabama products.

According to USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, Alabama's agricultural exports reached an estimated \$1.6 billion in 2013, up from \$1.0 billion in 2009. These exports support about 12,000 jobs on the farm and in related industries in the state. Nationally, the value of agricultural exports exceeded \$150 billion in 2014 and supported over 1 million jobs. The USDA's Economic Research Service estimates that exports would grow by nearly \$7 billion by completing just two of the trade deals being debated today.

Looking more closely at the value of specific commodities exported from Alabama in 2013, broiler meat (chickens) surpassed \$570 million, cotton exceeded \$225 million, soybeans came in at nearly \$125 million, wheat exports were in excess of \$90 million, and beef totaled more than \$43 million.

Exports are essential to keeping market prices at sustainable levels for the farmer, but tariffs in a number of countries around the world limit our ability to take full advantage of certain markets. For example poultry tariffs can be as high as 240 percent in some countries. These barriers would be reduced or even eliminated in some cases through new trade agreements, allowing even more of our commodities to be exported.

As the Trans-Pacific Partnership and Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations continue, TPA is needed to show our partners that we are committed to closing the deal, and just as importantly, to allow Congress and the public to closely monitor the process to ensure the country's trade objectives are met.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jimmy Parnell", is written over a blue horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Jimmy Parnell

