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COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE  
CHAIR - SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
LIVESTOCK AND FOREIGN AGRICULTURE

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
WATER, OCEANS, AND WILDLIFE



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
EUROPE, EURASIA, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

TRANSATLANTIC LEGISLATORS' DIALOGUE  
CHAIR

NATO PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY  
MEMBER

November 5, 2020

Dear Colleague:

It is with a great sense of honor and duty to the United States that I seek to serve as Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture.

Despite fighting hard for his seat, our friend and colleague Collin Peterson will unfortunately not return next year. I commend him for his decades of leadership on the Agriculture Committee, which have left a profound mark on our nation.

These are challenging times for our country and the COVID-19 pandemic has shone a particularly bright light on the fragility of our food system. I believe I have the experience, expertise and passion to connect to rural Americans and lead American agriculture into the future as Chairman of the committee. As a third-generation family farmer and 16-year veteran of the Agriculture Committee, I will bring with me a lifetime of knowledge about American agriculture to the Chairmanship. I have served as the top Democrat on subcommittees overseeing everything from livestock, foreign agriculture, rural development, farm credit, agriculture research and biotechnology. I understand what farmers encounter, from the impacts of climate change and market instability to the need to conserve limited natural resources and preserve our ability to grow the food we need to feed our communities, country, and the world.

My top priority on the Agriculture Committee is to ensure that no American goes hungry. Chief among this is the preservation and expansion of nutrition programs for the most vulnerable members of our communities. Nearly a quarter of my constituents depend on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to help put food on the table. I have fought against any and all who sought to roll back these benefits, and I've worked to expand programs that feed the most vulnerable Americans. For example, as part of the 2014 Farm Bill, I created an innovative pilot program to establish best practices for SNAP Employment and Training programs. As a result, this program now boasts significant increases in placing participants in stable employment. I view SNAP as a critical safety net, providing our communities with the foundation to grow and thrive, therefore we must be vigilant in our fight to maintain and expand its mission.

Importantly, the Agriculture Committee also has jurisdiction over our nation's diverse and complex agriculture system. I firmly believe that America's farmers are stewards of the land and environment, but conservation of these resources is becoming increasingly difficult in the face of climate change. That is why I fought for increased funding for on-farm conservation programs, including innovative efforts like the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, which leverages private dollars with federal funds to create landscape-scale conservation projects. Thanks to those changes, billions of dollars are now available to conserve land, water,

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and protect the environment, but more work needs to be done. We must harness all the tools at our disposal, as well as lean into out-of-the-box thinking to combat climate change so America's farmers can continue to feed the world.

We must also maintain and expand foreign markets for American crops and agricultural products. Not only has the Trump Administration's trade agenda devastated America's family farms, his so-called trade "deals" have done little to make up for the access we should have had all along, resulting in lost markets that will take decades to repair. Farmers are currently surviving thanks to an unprecedented amount of federal mitigation dollars. A farm economy propped up by payments from the government is not a healthy one and we must quickly get to work to right this ship.

Finally, but perhaps most importantly, this year's election showed us again the deep, deep divide between rural and urban America. Our message of economic prosperity, lower healthcare costs and a better tomorrow is simply not resonating with large swaths of the country. As someone who has represented a rural district through a coalition of bipartisan support, I understand how to speak to rural America in a way they understand and appreciate. The Agriculture Committee can, and should be, better utilized as the link to rural America and the showcase of what our Caucus stands for.

The next Chair of the Agriculture Committee has big shoes to fill. I have spent a lifetime cultivating relationships with farmers and hunger advocates and bring the first-hand knowledge of what it takes to put food on the table each day. I have a track record of working with traditional agriculture, while also pushing for more progressive policies to better position our food systems for the future. I believe the voice of the Committee can be better leveraged for the greater good of our Caucus.

I believe the production of food and fiber for America is a national security issue. If given the opportunity to serve as Chairman, I will continue to ensure our most vulnerable Americans are given the assistance they need and work every day toward the goal of feeding every American.

Sincerely,



JIM COSTA  
Member of Congress