

U.S. Reps. Kind, Moore and Pocan: Dairyland Democrats send letter expressing concerns after the administration strikes backroom deal with Japan that could leave the U.S. dairy industry behind

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Washington, DC—Today, Wisconsin Reps. **Kind**, Moore, and Pocan—along with Reps. DelBene and Welch—sent a letter to United States Trade (USTR) Ambassador Lighthizer after finding out at the eleventh hour that the administration potentially failed to acquire a truly level playing field for U.S. dairy exporters into Japan. Instead, in the backdoor agreement, U.S. dairy will have inferior access to the market compared to competitors like the European Union and signatories of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTTP) on exports including cheese, butter, skim milk powder, ice cream, and condensed milk.

The administration is required to consult with Congress when new trade agreement negotiations are happening in order to ensure any new agreement would include access for key agriculture sectors like dairy. Those conversations never happened. If they had, they would have heard concerns that this new deal fails to achieve meaningful gains for the U.S. dairy industry, especially at a time when farmers are bearing the burden of the administration's reckless trade war with China. Folks in Wisconsin are suffering real consequences as a result of this administration's trade policies, for example:

- Wisconsin agricultural exports to China [fell](#) by 25% in the first four months of 2019.
- Wisconsin had a [record high dairy number of farm closings](#) in 2018 and the state [leading the nation](#) in family farm bankruptcies for the [second year in a row](#).
- An average of three farms close a day in Wisconsin.

In order to protect access for key agriculture sectors like dairy, earlier this year Rep. Kind has introduced legislation to reassert Congress's Constitutionally-granted trade authorities and to establish a process that allows U.S. companies to request an exclusion from the tariffs imposed on Chinese imports.

"The President has frequently promised that his negotiations would lead to the best trade agreements for our farmers, but that hasn't been the case. Instead, our dairy farmers are stuck competing on an uneven global playing field," said **Rep. Ron Kind**. "In a time where three Wisconsin dairy farms are closing a day, there couldn't be a worse possible time to leave them behind. If Ambassador Lighthizer had consulted with Congress on this trade agreement, perhaps he would have been better prepared to get dairy farmers the deal they need and deserve. This administration needs to stop using our farmers as pawns and start making trade deals that empower them."

"Trump is once again ignoring Congress, by trying to secure a trade deal with Japan behind closed doors and in a piece-meal way," said **Rep. Gwen Moore**. "Trump's two-stage approach and failure to consult with Congress will mean any trade deal will be ripe with inadequacies. America needs comprehensive trade agreements that provide widespread benefits and don't leave key US industries behind."

"I am concerned that this administration isn't prioritizing Wisconsin dairy farmers as they continue to face the brunt of his failed trade war," said **Rep. Mark Pocan**. "At this time, I demand to know how the president will help—not hurt—Wisconsin farmers as they work tirelessly to compete in a global marketplace where this administration has tipped the scales against them."

Read the letter to USTR Ambassador [here](#).