

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 31, 2023

The Honorable Katherine Tai
U.S. Trade Representative
Office of the U.S. Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Ambassador Tai,

As Members of the California Delegation, we write to request you engage on working to remove burdensome tariffs on the domestic almonds industry in ongoing trade discussions between the United States and Turkey. We appreciate your ongoing engagement on the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework and successful work in getting India to lower tariffs on United States almonds.

As you are aware, almonds are critical to the United States as the nation's number one horticultural export, with Turkey being one of the largest markets for almonds. According to reports, Turkey intends to raise the (most-favored-nation) duty on U.S. inshell and shelled almonds by 15 percent. Combined with Turkey's existing 10 percent retaliatory tariff in response to U.S. Section 232 tariffs on steel and aluminum, this would result in a substantial 25 percent tariff, a significant increase from the current rate, which has already posed challenges for the domestic almond industry. Such a hike offers other countries such as Australia, Spain, Uzbekistan, and Iran an unjustified competitive advantage over US almonds in the Turkish market.

California alone accounts for nearly 80 percent of global almond production with 91 percent of almond farms family-operated, and many are less than 100 acres. Almonds create over 100,000 jobs in the food and agricultural sector, particularly in the economically challenged Central Valley of California. According to data from the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), exports of almonds under Chapter 8 of the Harmonized System (HS) reached a value of almost \$4.9 billion in 2022. The total economic value of exported almonds for the United States in 2022 was \$4.646 billion, produced on 1.6 million acres, and accounted for a farm gate value of \$5.6 billion. U.S. almond growers should not be punished for such hard work despite the challenges post-COVID-19, weather disaster, and supply chain issues.

California almond growers continue to excel and meet sustainability goals, which demonstrates what family farms can achieve with collaboration and engagement at the local, state, and federal level. Over the past two decades, almond production has nearly doubled to meeting rising global demand, making access of foreign markets crucial for the industry. While Turkey's domestic production of tree nuts continues to rise, FAS Global Agricultural Information Network market reports anticipate Turkey to make substantial import of almonds in Marketing Year 2023/24 to meet steady consumer demand.

Building upon the accomplishments of India, we hope these tariffs continue to be included in discussions with Turkey. Despite these hurdles, the United States retains its position as one of the leading suppliers of almonds to Turkey, and we hope to see this trend continue.

Thank you for your fair and full consideration of this letter. We appreciate your attention to this matter on behalf of our constituents and urge you to continue to engage with us on this matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can be of assistance to provide more information.

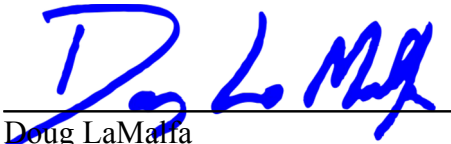
Sincerely,



Jim Costa
Member of Congress



John S. Duarte
Member of Congress



Doug LaMalfa
Member of Congress



Kevin McCarthy
Member of Congress



David G. Valadao
Member of Congress



Josh Harder
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Ken Calvert
Member of Congress



Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



Young Kim
Member of Congress



Katie Porter
Member of Congress