Resolution

WHEREAS, sheep and lambs provide the economic cornerstone for western states' rural economies, supporting schools, places of worship, small town businesses, hospitals, and the social infrastructure of rural America.

WHEREAS, sheep perform important environmental purposes by grazing and browsing through noxious and other undesirable and invasive weed species and by reducing excess vegetation in fire prone areas.

WHEREAS, the United States historically protected domestic sheep production from global market distortions through tariffs.

WHEREAS, under the Tariff Act of 1930, tariffs previously enacted in 1890, 1921, and 1922 were increased to $3 for live sheep, 7 cents per pound for lamb meat, and 5 cents per pound for mutton.

WHEREAS, by 1942, while being protected from global market distortions since 1930 with tariffs, the U.S. sheep inventory reached a historical high of 56.2 million.

WHEREAS, since 1930, Congress has not adjusted tariffs on sheep or sheep meat for inflation, rendering them immaterial today.

WHEREAS, adjusted for inflation, $3 per head in 1930 is $54 per head today, 7 cents per pound in 1930 is $1.25 per pound today, and 5 cents per pound is $0.89.

WHEREAS, the United States has a long, successful history of maintaining viable domestic production systems for many agricultural commodities through tariff rate quotas, such as those employed to ensure a viable domestic peanut industry, sugar industry, dairy industry, cotton industry, tobacco industry, chocolate industry, and animal feed industry.

WHEREAS, known global market distortions that can be effectively alleviated with a tariff rate quota system include less stringent production practices abroad (e.g., widespread use of compound 1080 abroad while it is severely restricted in the domestic market), global concentration (e.g., JBS dominates the global market in meat trade), persistently devalued exchange rates abroad (e.g., today a dollar's worth of Australin lamb exported to the United States returns $1.55 to the Australian exporter (i.e., 1 U.S. dollar equals 1.55 Australian dollar).

WHEREAS, the U.S. sheep industry has not been protected from known and debilitating global market distortions for decades, resulting in the following consequences:

- The domestic sheep industry is non-competitive in the global export market.
- In four decades, the U.S. sheep inventory declined 62%, and at 5 million head is now at the lowest level in history.
- In four decades, the number of domestic sheep operations with over 100 head (commercial sheep operations) declined 60%.
- In just the past decade, consumption of sheep meat in America increased 62%.

- While lamb/mutton consumption increased since 2012, domestic production declined 16%.
- While consumption increased and production declined since 2012, imports surged 134%.
- By 2022, imported lamb and mutton captured 74% of the domestic market.
- The American sheep industry is the first U.S. livestock sector to be predominantly outsourced.

WHEREAS, without some form of management over current import flows, by way of tariffs, tariff rate quotas, or quantity restrictions, the systemic, downward trajectories of every measure of the American sheep industry's viability foretells the commercial domestic sheep industry will soon become the first livestock industry in America to fall completely to import competition.

THEREFOR, We, the _____________ County Commissioners urge Governor ____________, U.S. Senators ________________ and _________________, and U.S. Representatives ___________________ to urge the Administration and Congress to halt the ongoing injury to the U.S. sheep industry caused by excessive imports and urge the establishment of tariffs and a tariff rate quota system, or some other form of quantity controls that will ensure the viability and competitiveness of the domestic sheep industry.