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May 24, 2024

U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

U.S. House Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Members of the Senate and House Agriculture Committees,

We, the undersigned, are United States veterans. We served to protect and defend the United States Constitution and the people and interests of the United States of America.

We write to encourage Congress to undertake the patriotic and constitutional act of passing legislation to empower America's citizens to support America's food producers, whose toils preserve and protect our national security. Specifically, we urge Congress to pass mandatory country of origin labeling (MCOOL) for beef so our citizens can once again support America's cattle farmers and ranchers by distinguishing our USA-produced product in grocery stores across America.

Among the many interests we helped protect and defend while serving in the military is America's ability to freely use, without foreign intervention, her natural resources to produce life's sustenance – food. To achieve that end, we have farmers and ranchers.

But over the past generation or so, Congress has idly watched the exodus of hundreds of thousands of United States farmers and ranchers. This has weakened our nation's national food security.

America's cattle farmers and ranchers have exhausted all legal means to restore MCOOL for beef, but a U.S. district court ruled that it must be restored by Congress.

Congress must act now!

We are patriots, and preserving for ourselves and our children the family farm and ranch system of agriculture that helped make our nation strong is a patriotic and constitutional act Congress must undertake.

Many of us veterans are farmers and ranchers ourselves. And many of our fellow veterans are now among the hundreds of thousands of producers forced to leave their farms and ranches. The latest census shows that more than nine percent of U.S. food producers are veterans, but today we are nearly 65,000 fewer in number than just five years ago.

Contributing to the farm and ranch exodus of veterans and nonveterans alike is Congress' deference to international tribunals over matters for which supreme authority rests with our United States Constitution. For example, Congress previously passed MCOOL for beef and a U.S. appeals court upheld Congress' constitutional right to do so. Nevertheless, Congress inexplicitly capitulated to the World Trade Organization when the international tribunal admonished our constitutionally passed MCOOL law.

We veterans urge Congress to once again stand up for America by passing the American Beef Labeling Act (S.52) or the Country of Origin Labeling Enforcement Act (H.R. 5081), both of which will restore MCOOL for beef for America. The bills will enable beef produced by United States cattle to bear a "United States of America" designation. And they will empower America's consumers to patriotically support America's cattle producers by choosing to purchase USA beef produced from their USA cattle.

We stand as Veterans for MCOOL. And on this Memorial Day, we both honor and pay tribute to those who lost their lives in service to our country for the freedoms we all enjoy today.

Sincerely,



Brett Kenzy, R-CALF USA President, US Army

Farmer Veteran Coalition
Gary Greene, Army
Andrea Candlish, Army
Bruce Harrison, USN
Randal Hicks, Army
Ricky Carter, Marine Corps
Manuel Chacon, Army
Rick Overstake, Army
Luke Palombo, Army
Howell Wheaton, US Marine
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LaVern Johnson, Army

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AJ Richards, Army
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Shawn Behrman, Marine Corps
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Taffy Howard, Air Force
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James Bowling, Marines
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Cc: Members of Congress