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Obispo

April 1, 2011

The Honorable Karen Ross
California Department of Food and Agriculture
1220 N Street, Room 400
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Ross:

On March 16th, I had the pleasure to join U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack at the Port of Long Beach where the role of agricultural trade and jobs was highlighted. International trade is vital to California's farmers and ranchers and the more we can do to remove trade barriers directly supports the \$12.4 billion in exports that our farmers and ranchers contribute to the state's economy.

To further encourage and promote agricultural exports from the state, I, on behalf of the California State Board of Food and Agriculture request your direct support and advocacy on the Korea – U.S. Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA). The agreement, currently pending Congressional approval, is critical for our state's agricultural exports which support more than 100,000 jobs on and off the farm.

Specifically the agreement will substantially lower and/or eliminate duties on a variety of our farm exports. In the case of oranges, California's largest agricultural export to the market (\$73 million) – tariffs will drop from 50 percent to 30 percent for specified shipping months upon implementation and then will be eliminated over the course of seven years. Tariffs on walnuts (\$48 million) currently at 30 percent (shelled) and 45 percent (in-shell) will have duty free access within 15 years. Beef (\$41 million) currently at a tariff of 40 percent will have duty free access in 15 years. By eliminating these trade barriers, California as the largest agricultural producer and exporter will benefit significantly, providing jobs and contributing to the state's overall economy.

Given Korea's importance as our sixth largest agricultural export destination, I strongly encourage active involvement and support by the Administration on this issue.

Sincerely,

Craig McNamara
President

cc: The Honorable Jerry Brown

