



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

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May 14, 2009

Ambassador Ronald Kirk
United States Trade Representative
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Ambassador Kirk:

We are concerned by the implementation of foreign trade barriers instituted in response to the recent H1N1 influenza outbreak. We believe that some countries are using the H1N1 outbreak to ban the importation of United States (U.S.) meat products purely for economic gain.

As you know, pork products have not been associated with the H1N1 outbreak. However, China recently implemented a ban on pork products from the Commonwealth of Virginia. In 2008, Virginia ranked second among U.S. states in pork exports to mainland China. The value of Virginia's pork exports to China, including Hong Kong, was in excess of \$50 million last year. Losing access to this important market – even for a short period of time – could have serious consequences for Virginia agriculture.

To this end, we respectfully request that you work with the appropriate Chinese officials to resolve this issue with expedience and make reopening the Chinese market to U.S. pork products a top priority. It is extremely unfortunate that this ban has occurred at a time when pork producers and processors in Virginia and throughout the nation are already struggling with higher feed cost and depressed prices for pork products. Maintaining access to foreign markets such as China is critical to the long-term success of Virginia's pork industry and agricultural industry as a whole

We thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Robert S. Bloxom in cursive.

Robert S. Bloxom
Secretary of Agriculture & Forestry

Handwritten signature of Todd P. Haymore in cursive.

Todd P. Haymore
Commissioner, Department of
Agriculture and Consumer Services

c: The Honorable Timothy M. Kaine
The Honorable Patrick Gottschalk
Mr. Alfonso Lopez