

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 9, 2022

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary  
United States Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

As Senators representing sugar-producing states, we write to express our strong support for U.S. sugar policy. Americans benefit every day from the lowest-cost, highest-quality food supply in the world, enabled, in part, by the certainty and stability of our domestic sugar industry. Accordingly, we ask that you reject proposals that would weaken U.S. sugar policy and jeopardize our nation's food security.

The sugar supply chain in America is incredibly resilient, as evidenced by the sector's ability to maintain delivery of American-made sugar to store shelves and to food manufacturing companies throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. At zero cost to taxpayers, domestic sugar policy supports more than 151,000 American jobs in more than two dozen states, and through a network of strategically placed distribution centers, ensures consumers a reliable supply of high-quality, responsibly-produced sugar at a reasonable price.

For decades, sugar supplies have met domestic demand through sugarbeet and sugarcane production and imported raw and refined supplies. U.S. processors and refiners maintain stocks on hand to meet demand and to ensure that carryover stocks are adequate during sugarbeet and sugarcane harvests.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) own measures, today, the U.S. sugar market is adequately supplied. The latest USDA World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) projects the current sugar stocks-to-use ratio at 14.4 percent. USDA has determined that a stocks-to-use ratio of at least 13.5 percent is adequate to supply the U.S. market. This figure suggests that more than 1.8 million tons of sugar stocks are on hand leading into the fall sugarcane and sugarbeet harvest season.

Since the 1980s, wholesale and retail prices for refined sugar have been stable and falling when accounting for inflation. Today's prices remain comparable with those in other developed countries. Of course, supply chain bottlenecks have partially contributed to the rising cost of food in our country. These supply chain obstacles have driven up the cost of food production and transportation as well. Rising input costs, especially for fertilizer and diesel fuel, along with a labor shortage in the transportation industry, have significantly increased the cost of production for our sugar growers.

Despite these current challenges, thanks to U.S. sugar policy, our sugar supply chain remains resilient and in a strong position to address future challenges. It is imperative that USDA not make changes that would create a glut in the U.S. market and collapse prices below grower costs of production, which would violate the spirit of U.S. sugar policy and ultimately drive family farmers out of business.

Accordingly, we urge you to reject requests that undermine U.S. sugar policy and our nation's food security, while putting thousands of American jobs at risk. Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,




John Hoeven  
U.S. Senator



Tina Smith  
U.S. Senator



Bill Cassidy, M.D.  
U.S. Senator



Michael F. Bennet  
U.S. Senator



Rick Scott  
U.S. Senator



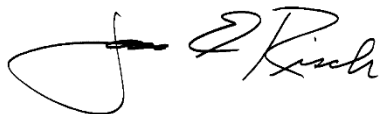
Debbie Stabenow  
U.S. Senator



Marco Rubio  
U.S. Senator



Amy Klobuchar  
U.S. Senator



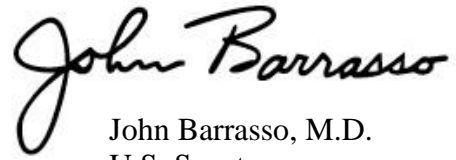
James E. Risch  
U.S. Senator



Mike Crapo  
U.S. Senator



Cynthia M. Lummis  
U.S. Senator



John Barrasso, M.D.  
U.S. Senator