

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 6, 2014

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairwoman
Senate Appropriations Committee
The Capitol S-128
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
The Capitol S-146-A
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski and Ranking Member Shelby:

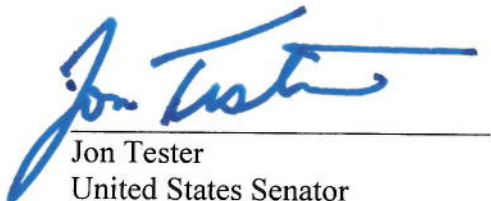
As the Senate debates how to provide funding for the federal government for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2015, we urge you to reject efforts to weaken or suspend Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) through any continuing resolution or omnibus appropriations bill. Following a deliberative process, Congress enacted COOL in response to demand from consumers and livestock producers for reliable information about where their meat and seafood come from. COOL has overwhelming public and producer support but its implementation has been challenged in an international trade dispute for more than five years. It is critical that Congress not short-circuit ongoing efforts to support American producers and consumers.

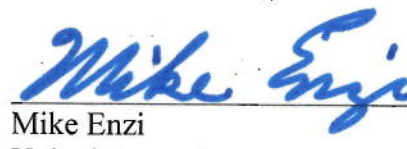
The WTO has been considering COOL since 2008 and the dispute will likely continue well into 2015. The complexity of the case is unlikely to yield a clear-cut decision. However, the United States government has tools to address the outcome, once the WTO process reaches finality, to ensure labeling remains consistent with our trade obligations. The Senate should not undermine the United States' position by inserting a legislative rider into an Appropriations bill before the WTO process is final. Earlier this year, the Senate Appropriations Committee rejected attempts to weaken or suspend COOL enforcement. Congress also excluded any COOL legislative riders in the Fiscal Year 2015 Continuing Resolution. We strongly believe these were responsible decisions and ones that respect the right of the United States to defend the laws which Congress passes.

While the ruling on the appeal is not yet public, anonymous foreign sources continue their efforts to undermine COOL. It is critical that the Senate Appropriations Committee not allow these rumors from abroad to pre-emptively weaken U.S. law before the dispute resolution process has run its course. The United States has the right to implement these popular and commonsense labeling laws. Any legislative rider to undermine COOL before the WTO process is finalized would disadvantage American producers and roll-back the transparency within our meat markets that consumers want and have come to expect. Consumers have the right to know where their food comes from and farmers should be able to market their livestock as born and raised in America.


Thank you for your attention to this important issue, and we again urge you to exclude legislative riders aimed at weakening or suspending COOL from any legislation that provides funding for the federal government in Fiscal Year 2015.

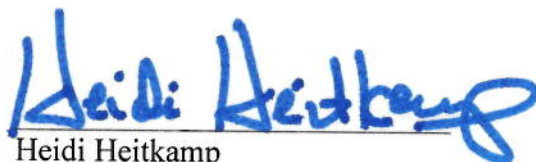
Sincerely,

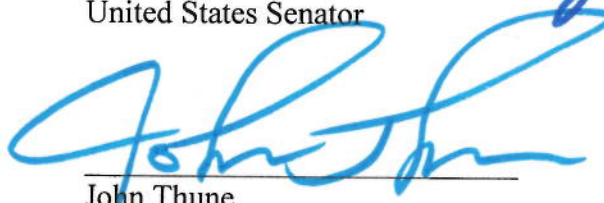

Jon Tester
United States Senator



Mike Enzi
United States Senator


Tim Johnson
United States Senator


Charles Grassley
United States Senator

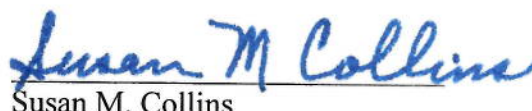

Heidi Heitkamp
United States Senator



John Thune
United States Senator


Tom Harkin
United States Senator

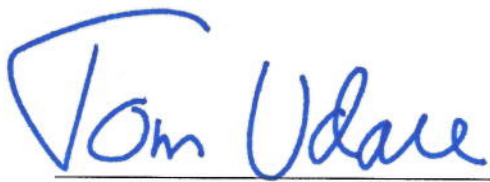

John Hoeven
United States Senator


Mark Begich
United States Senator


Susan M. Collins
United States Senator


Carl Levin
United States Senator

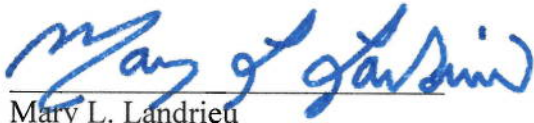

David Vitter
United States Senator



Tom Udall
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Mary L. Landrieu
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



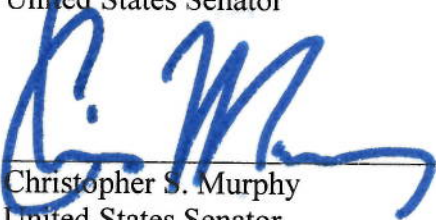
Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Jeff Merkley
United States Senator



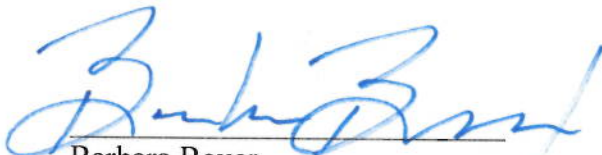
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Claire McCaskill
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator




Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



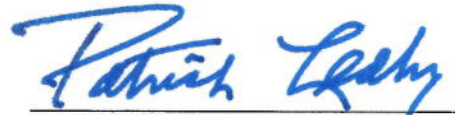
Al Franken
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator


John Walsh
United States Senator


Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator


Patrick Leahy
United States Senator


Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

CC: The Honorable Mark Pryor
The Honorable Roy Blunt