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May 13, 2020

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary, United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

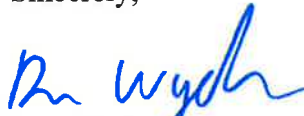
I write in support of the Oregon Department of Agriculture's request for an emergency temporary exemption from the United State Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Federal Meat Inspection Act requirements. Inspection will be picked up by Oregon Department of Agriculture inspectors. Oregon's state licensed meat processors have the capacity to step in and provide the safe and high quality product that is needed during this time of emergency.

As you know, the inspection requirements are administered by the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) to allow facilities that are licensed under Oregon's Department of Agriculture (ODA) to sell and donate processed meat intrastate. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has severely disrupted that process and has had devastating impacts on the food supply chain across the country. Temporarily exempting the ODA from the USDA's meat inspection requirements, while still allowing for state inspection, would allow local ranchers and producers in Oregon an additional market to ease the economic burdens of this pandemic. It would also provide critical support to local food banks, school and senior nutrition programs, hospitals and other programs which have struggled to feed people during these trying times.

The state of Oregon is actively working with my office and Oregon ranchers and producers on rebuilding a permanent state meat inspection program that could support livestock producers longer-term and create opportunity for new markets. However, there is an immediate need in Oregon to correct the food delivery crisis and address the disruptions caused by COVID-19. That need can be met by providing a temporary exemption to the USDA meat inspection requirements and still retain a high level of food safety.

I appreciate the work the USDA has done to address food supply chain issues and thank you for your swift consideration during this unprecedented time.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator

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