May 19, 2014

The Honorable Harold Rogers Chairman Committee on Appropriations U.S. House of Representatives The Honorable Nita Lowey Ranking Member Committee on Appropriations U.S. House of Representatives

Cc: Members of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey:

The undersigned 179 farm, rural, faith, environmental, labor, farmworker and consumer organizations respectfully urge you to support basic food labeling and to reject any attempts to defund or undermine Country-of-Origin Labeling (COOL) law and regulations. Consumers want to know more, not less, about the origins of their food and using an appropriations rider to deny them that knowledge is unacceptable.

Efforts will likely be made to weaken COOL regulations and enforcement during Senate consideration of the fiscal year 2015 appropriations bill. Our organizations remain steadfast in their opposition to any legislative changes to COOL or attempts to prevent consumers from knowing the origins of their food.

There is no need to halt enforcement of COOL. Congress intended to maintain the current COOL labels when it refused to accept a provision that would have hamstrung COOL as part of the 2014 Farm Bill. We ask that you follow the leadership of the Senate Agriculture Committee in opposing any changes to COOL at this juncture. Furthermore, both the ongoing proceedings at the World Trade Organization and in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia have found that the goal of the COOL statute and current regulations uphold a legitimate public interest and the 2013 improvements to the rules brought COOL into compliance with our trade and domestic legal obligations.

Additionally, we ask that you speak favorably of COOL during Appropriations Committee hearings and markups. Farmers and ranchers are proud of what they produce and should be allowed to promote their products. Consumers deserve clear, direct and informative labels. Providing more accurate labels with more information is a win-win situation for producers and consumers.

COOL is extremely important to our organizations, and we oppose any appropriations language that would harm the integrity of the label. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

## Sincerely,

Alabama Contract Poultry Growers Association Alabama State Association of Cooperatives Alaska Farmers Union Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment Alternative Energy Resources Organization (AERO) (MT) American Agriculture Movement American Federation of Government Employees (AFL-CIO), Local 3354, USDA-St. Louis American Grassfed Association American Raw Milk Producers Pricing Association Arizona Consumers Council Foundation Arkansas Farmers Union Ashtabula, Geauga, Lake County (OH) Farmers' Union Berks (PA) Gas Truth BioRegional Strategies Buckeye Quality Beef Association (OH) California Dairy Campaign California Farmers Union Campaign for Contract Agriculture Reform Campaign for Family Farms and the Environment Caney Fork Headwaters Association (TN) Carolina Farm Stewardship Association (NC) Social Services Office-Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri/Diocese of Jefferson City Cattle Producers of Louisiana Cattle Producers of Louisiana Cattle Producers of Washington Center for Earth Spirituality and Rural Ministry (MN) Center for Food Safety Center for Media and Democracy's Food Rights Network Center for Rural Affairs Central Co-op (WA) Chicago Consumer Coalition Church Women United of New York State Citizen Action Coalition of Indiana Citizens for Sanity.Com, Inc. (FL) The CJD Foundation Cleanwater Action Council of Northeast Wisconsin Coalition for a Prosperous America Colorado Independent CattleGrowers Association Community Alliance for Global Justice (WA) Community Farm Alliance (KY) Community Food and Justice Coalition (CA) Consumer Assistance Council, Inc. Consumer Federation of America Consumer Federation of California The Consumer Federation of the Southeast Contract Poultry Growers Association of the Virginias The Cornucopia Institute Cornucopia Network NJ/TN Chapter Crawford Stewardship Project (WI) Cultivating Community (ME) Cumberland Countians for Ecojustice (TN) Dakota Resource Council Dakota Rural Action of SD East New York Farms!/United Community Centers Ecological Farming Association (CA) Endangered Habitats League (CA) Equal Exchange Fair World Project (OR) Family Farm Defenders (WI) Farm Aid Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance Farmworker Association of Florida Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund Florida Certified Organic Growers and Consumers, Inc. Food & Water Watch Food Chain Workers Alliance Food Democracy Now! GardenShare (NY) Grassroots International Hmong National Development, Inc. Hunger Action Los Angeles Illinois Farmers Union Illinois Stewardship Alliance Independent Beef Association of North Dakota (I-BAND) Independent Cattlemen of Nebraska Independent Cattlemen of Wyoming Indian Nations Conservation Alliance Indiana Farmers Union Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy Interchurch Ministries of Nebraska International Brotherhood of Teamsters International Texas Longhorn Association Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future (MD) Kansas Cattlemen's Association Kansas Farmers Union Kellyn Foundation (PA) La Montanita Co-op Label GMOs San Francisco Land Stewardship Project (MN) Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA)

Massachusetts Fishermen's Partnership, Inc. Michael Fields Agricultural Institute (WI) Michigan Farmers Union Midwest Environmental Advocates (WI) Midwest Organic & Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) Minnesota Farmers Union Mississippi Assoc. of Cooperatives Missouri Farmers Union Missouri National Farmers Organization Missouri Rural Crisis Center Missouri's Best Beef Cooperative Montana Farmers Union Murray County (OK) Independent Cattlemen's Association National Consumers League National Family Farm Coalition National Farmers Organization National Farmers Union National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry National Latino Farmers & Ranchers Trade Association National Organic Coalition National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition National Young Farmers Coalition Nature Abounds (PA) Nebraska Farmers Union Nebraska State Grange Nebraska Sustainable Agriculture Society Nebraska Wildlife Federation Nebraska Women Involved in Farm Economics (NE WIFE) Network for Environmental & Economic Responsibility of United Church of Christ Nevada Live Stock Association New England Farmers Union (CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT) New Entry Sustainable Farming Project N. Carolina Assoc. of Black Lawyers, Land Loss Prevention Project North Dakota Farmers Union Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance Northeast Organic Farming Assoc. - NH Northeast Organic Farming Assoc. - NY Northeast Organic Farming Assoc. - VT Northeast Organic Farming Association, Interstate Council (NOFA-IC) Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group Northern Plains Resource Council (MT) Northern Wisconsin Beef Producers Northwest Atlantic Marine Alliance (MA) Northwest Farm Bill Action Group Oglala Sioux Livestock and Land Owners Association (SD) Ohio Environmental Stewardship Alliance Ohio Farmers Union Oregon Rural Action Organic Consumers Association Organic Farmers' Agency for Relationship Marketing (OFARM) Organization for Competitive Markets PCC Natural Markets (WA) Peach Bottom Concerned Citizens Group (PBCCG) (PA) Pennsylvania Farmers Union Pennypack Farm and Education Center (PA) Pesticide Action Network North America Powder River Basin Resource Council (WY) Public Citizen R-CALF United Stockgrowers of America

- Rio Grande Community Farm Rocky Mountain Farmers Union Roots of Change Rural Advancement Foundation International - USA (RAFI-USA) Rural Coalition/Coalición Rural Rural Vermont The Second Chance Foundation Slow Food USA Small Planet Institute Social and Economical Development Project South Dakota Farmers Union South Dakota Livestock Auction Markets Association South Dakota Sheep Growers Association South Dakota Stockgrowers Association Sustain LA (CA)
- Tidal Creek Cooperative (Food Market) (NC) Tilth Producers of Washington Tooling, Manufacturing and Technologies Assoc. U.S. Cattlemen's Association United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries Virginia Association for Biological Farming Virginia Citizens Consumer Council Washington Farmers Union Waterkeeper Alliacne Western Colorado Congress Western Organization of Resource Councils (WORC) Western Sustainable Agriculture Working Group WhyHunger Wisconsin Farmers Union Women, Food and Agriculture Network