

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 18, 2019

The Honorable John Hoeven  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and  
Drug Administration and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and  
Drug Administration and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Hoeven and Ranking Member Merkley:

We write to ask your support for the Acer Access and Development Program, which supports the growth of the U.S. maple syrup industry. To ensure this program's continued success, we respectfully request no less than \$5 million for the Acer Access and Development Program in the FY2020 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. This program was recently reauthorized through 2023 at \$20 million in the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018.

Maple syrup is an important agricultural product across 10 states in the Northeast and Upper Midwest. According to the USDA, in 2017, the United States produced more than 4.27 million gallons of syrup, worth approximately \$147 million. Maple sugaring provides income to an estimated 10,000 maple producers spread across the country. Maple is also a critical conservation crop, which helps to keep our forests in production, conserves important lands, protects water quality, and provides a valuable economic benefit to rural communities.

The maple industry has shown significant growth in recent years. U.S. production has nearly doubled in the last decade thanks to recent innovations in vacuum tubing, sanitation practices, and better taps. Furthermore, between just 2015 and 2017 maple syrup production grew by nearly 840,000 gallons. The Acer program provides the opportunity for further investment and research to support farmers, increase production, strengthen conservation, and help drive efficiency.

We are pleased that the committee has previously provided support for the Acer program and grateful the committee was able to provide an increase for this program in FY 2018. If again provided appropriated funds, the Acer Access and Development Program will continue to support maple producers and allow for further investment in research and production to allow the U.S. to better compete in the global marketplace.

We understand that in the current fiscal climate budgets are constrained, which is why we are asking the Committee to fund this program at only \$5 million, one quarter of its authorized

amount of \$20 million. We appreciate your consideration of this request and look forward to working with you to support this important domestic agricultural product.

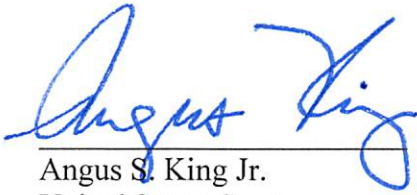
Sincerely,



Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senate



Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senate



Angus S. King Jr.  
United States Senate



Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senate



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senate



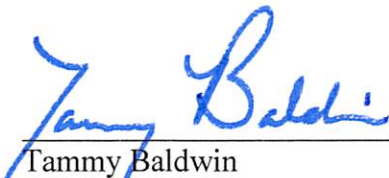
Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senate



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senate



Bernard Sanders  
United States Senate



Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senate