

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 11, 2013

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition and Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition and Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow and Ranking Member Cochran:

As you prepare to meet with your House counterparts to reconcile the differences between the House and Senate farm bills, we are writing to raise our strong objections to provisions in the House-passed legislation that would greatly undermine the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture to enforce the Packers and Stockyards Act.

The Packers and Stockyards Act was passed in 1921 to promote fair and competitive marketing in livestock and poultry for the benefit of consumers, livestock producers, and poultry growers. In contrast, the House farm bill includes Section 11102, which would greatly limit the authority of the Secretary to address deceptive, fraudulent, retaliatory, and anti-competitive practices by meatpackers in the livestock industry. The House provision would repeal the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 section addressing these concerns, rescind existing protections already in place, and would limit enforcement and policy actions on many other aspects of the Packers and Stockyards Act.

We believe regulation should be limited in a marketplace, but we also believe having little to no regulation in place is problematic, especially in our concentrated livestock and poultry industries. Section 11102 of the House Farm Bill would leave small producers vulnerable against concentrated market forces. We strongly urge the Senate to reject the House's provision in its entirety.

Sincerely,

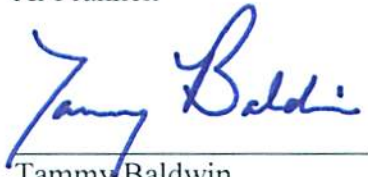

Jon Tester
Charles E. Grassley
Tim Johnson
John D. Rockefeller



Al Franken



Joe Manchin



Tammy Baldwin



Heidi Heitkamp