

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 17, 2019

The Honorable Robert E. Lighthizer
United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20508

Dear Ambassador Lighthizer:

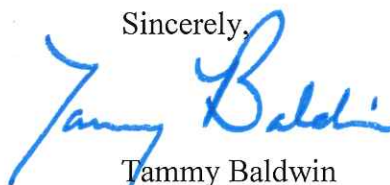
Ginseng is an important crop to the state of Wisconsin. Of the \$40 million in annual U.S. ginseng sales, \$31 million come from Wisconsin. As you negotiate a trade agreement between the United States and China, I am writing to highlight the pain retaliatory trade action from China is causing the ginseng industry in Wisconsin. Recently, I have heard troubling reports of Chinese officials seizing Wisconsin ginseng from individuals upon arrival in China. I believe China has begun these seizures of personal effects to retaliate against U.S. tariffs on Chinese imports. This barrier comes on top of the 20 percent tariff increase China has levied against American ginseng in response to U.S. tariffs on Chinese steel and aluminum imports. Both of these issues—the seizure of U.S. ginseng brought into China as personal effects and the retaliatory tariff—must be resolved to restore the trade of ginseng between the U.S. and China and protect Wisconsin jobs.

Currently, as a result of the trade tensions, ginseng trade between the United States and China has ceased. Chinese officials are using the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in bad faith to restrict U.S. ginseng exports and seize ginseng from Chinese citizens returning from abroad. These seizures are a result of China's failure to recognize a CITES "personal effects exemption" for dried, cultivated ginseng purchased and carried from the United States. As a result of the restrictions, ginseng producers in Wisconsin are facing significant losses.

Wisconsin is the number one producer of cultivated ginseng in the United States, accounting for about 90 to 95 percent of all cultivated ginseng produced in the country. China is the most important market for the United States ginseng industry. More than 85 percent of Wisconsin ginseng is exported to China or carried into China as gifts. We need to resolve these issues favorably for Wisconsin ginseng producers who are bearing the brunt of the retaliatory trade actions of the Chinese government.

I appreciate your attention to this request and I look forward to the opportunity to discuss it with you further at your convenience.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin
U.S. Senator

CC: Ambassador Greg Doud, Chief Agricultural Negotiator, Office of the United States Trade Representative.