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CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
RANKING MEMBER-SUBCOMMITTEE
ON LIVESTOCK, DAIRY, AND
POULTRY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMODITY
MARKETS, DIGITAL ASSETS, AND
RURAL DEVELOPMENT

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE

November 20, 2024

Dear Democratic Colleagues,

It is with a great sense of duty that I write to humbly ask for your support to serve as Ranking Member of the House Committee on Agriculture.

With the incoming return of Donald Trump to the Presidency, our Caucus needs a leader who will fight to protect the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), defend the historic investments we made through the Inflation Reduction Act, and bring a strong Democratic message back to rural America.

President-elect Trump will utilize Project 2025 as a roadmap for governing our nation. He has promised to slash SNAP, gut essential safety nets, eliminate science-based research, end marketing orders and checkoff programs, and cut American farmers off from foreign market access. These are just a few of the detrimental regulatory proposals from Project 2025 that will leave Americans and the world starving. President-elect Trump says he is going to eliminate our strong agriculture workforce by deporting millions of farmworkers, leaving their families broken, our farmers, ranchers, dairy men and woman bankrupt, and everyone else stuck paying higher prices at the grocery store.

As a member of the Committee for 20 years, I have the experience to lead Democrats as we find a path forward on passing a bipartisan Farm Bill, which is currently expired. Prior to serving in Congress, I was a member of the California State Senate where I served as chairman of the Committee on Agriculture and Water.

As the grandson of Portuguese dairy farmers who emigrated from the Azores islands, I grew up around agriculture, starting with working on my family's farm. Farming has been my primary source of income for 25 years. I understand the challenges farmers encounter, but I also understand the untapped opportunities and how we must continue to invest in rural America. I bring with me a lifetime of experience and knowledge about American agriculture to lead Committee Democrats.

As one of the Subcommittee Ranking Members, I have fought tirelessly to protect SNAP and other nutrition programs from baseless and misleading attacks and attempts to gut funding for these critical programs. A quarter of my constituents rely on SNAP to help put food on the table, and I see its importance every day. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, I advocated for increased nutrition assistance to American families and put forth a legislative agriculture framework to support farmers and ranchers. As Ranking Member, I will continue to lead our caucus' work to build on the Biden Administration's efforts to protect SNAP and explore additional solutions to improve and expand our nation's food and nutrition programs. As I have always said, food is a national security issue, and no American should go hungry.

I proudly voted alongside my Democratic colleagues for historic investments made by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). As Ranking Member, one of my priorities will be protecting these climate and conservation investments from attacks by the Trump Administration and continuing to make progress towards sustainability of American agriculture. We must harness all the tools at our disposal, as well as lean into out-of-the-box thinking to conserve America's lands and waters, protect the environment, and combat climate change so America's farmers can continue to feed the world. The IRA importantly included provisions supporting 1890 land grant institutions that have long lagged in resources due to historical inequities in funding. In representing a district with a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), I understand the need to continue to prioritize funding for HBCUs, HSIs, and other minority serving institutions by fighting for them to receive the equitable resources they need and deserve. I will continue to make this a focus of the important work of the Committee.

Agriculture trade is an important pillar that helps our farmers and ranchers. We must maintain and expand foreign markets for American crops and agricultural products, while continuing to bolster humanitarian food programs which are critical to global food security. I am committed to holding bad actors such as China accountable for unfair trade practices and ensuring fair implementation of the U.S. Mexico-Canada Agreement, and other free trade agreements. As Ranking Member, I will use my position to advance House Democrats' trade agenda and ensure American farmers and ranchers are being represented at the negotiating table.

As someone who has represented a rural, agriculture-focused district through a coalition of bipartisan support, **I understand how to represent rural Americans.** The Agriculture Committee can, and should, be better utilized as the link to rural America and to showcase what our Caucus stands for. As Ranking Member, I will engage our subcommittee ranking members, and seek input from and be accessible to all members of our Caucus. The Ranking Member should play an important role in helping members in tough districts by going and visiting with you and your constituents. With our collective engagement, Democrats will take back the majority.

Throughout my career, I have spent a lifetime cultivating relationships with farmers and hunger advocates, and I bring the firsthand knowledge of what it takes to put food on the table each day. I have a track record of working with traditional agriculture, while also pushing more progressive policies to better position and protect our food systems for the future. As I have always said, the production of food and fiber for America is a national and international security issue – no American should be left behind.

I look forward to **listening and speaking** with you to discuss how the Agriculture Committee can serve the needs of our constituents, our caucus, and the American public. My door is always open, and I stand ready to work with you – no issue is too big or too small. Thank you for your consideration. I hope to earn your support.

Sincerely,


JIM COSTA
Member of Congress