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HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 4005

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State of Washington

64th Legislature

2015 Regular Session

**By** Representatives Dent, Springer, Manweller, Clibborn, Klippert, Sullivan, Short, Hawkins, Smith, MacEwen, Wilcox, McCaslin, Kretz, Wilson, Fagan, Walsh, Condotta, Harris, Chandler, Scott, Magendanz, Pettigrew, Haler, Moeller, Kagi, Orcutt, Hargrove, Griffey, Buys, and Carlyle

1 TO THE HONORABLE BARACK OBAMA, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,  
2 AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF  
3 REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF  
4 THE UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, AND TO THE HONORABLE TOM  
5 VILSACK, SECRETARY OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE:

6 We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of  
7 the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled,  
8 respectfully represent and petition as follows:

9 WHEREAS, The agriculture and food industry, behind the production  
10 power of over thirty-seven thousand individual farms, is a forty-nine  
11 billion dollar industry employing approximately one hundred sixty  
12 thousand Washingtonians across all thirty-nine of the state's  
13 counties; and

14 WHEREAS, Washington farms grow over three hundred different  
15 commodities and Washington state leads the nation in the production  
16 of ten of those commodities including apples, pears, and sweet  
17 cherries; and

18 WHEREAS, Food processing alone employs approximately forty  
19 thousand people and makes Washington the United States leader in  
20 potato processing and apple juice manufacturing, and the second  
21 largest producer in the United States of premium wine; and

1       WHEREAS, Washington is a national leader in exporting food crops  
2 and feeding the world, exporting over fifteen billion dollars of  
3 agricultural products through Washington ports in 2013 alone; and

4       WHEREAS, International trade is vital to the economic health of  
5 Washington's agriculture industry, with wheat producers exporting up  
6 to ninety percent of their harvest, thirty percent of the state's  
7 apple harvest being exported, some dairies exporting nearly half of  
8 their entire output, twenty percent of all fresh produce being  
9 exported, and processed food such as french fries being sent from the  
10 state of Washington around the globe; and

11       WHEREAS, Given the global markets for Washington's agricultural  
12 bounty, it is vitally important for the agriculture and food industry  
13 to have reliable, affordable, efficient, and consistent access to  
14 ports for international trade; and

15       WHEREAS, Over the past two years, the inability of ports not only  
16 in Washington but down the west coast of the United States to  
17 reliably, affordably, efficiently, and consistently provide  
18 Washington's agricultural producers with access to global markets has  
19 had a significant and serious negative economic consequence for the  
20 agriculture and food industry; and

21       WHEREAS, Recent slowdowns in port efficiency has reduced overall  
22 nonaerospace Washington exports by nearly ten percent, and for some  
23 agricultural commodities such as wheat, french fries, forage  
24 products, and milk, closer to thirty percent; and

25       WHEREAS, The recent changes in port operations has affected not  
26 only food agriculture, but timber as well, with recent layoffs in the  
27 timber industry necessitated due to the inability of the timber  
28 industry to move processed products out of local ports; and

29       WHEREAS, The reductions in overall product exports does not take  
30 into account increased costs due to the necessity of air shipping,  
31 downward price movements forced by shipping delays, long-term damage  
32 to global markets as foreign buyers seek alternative suppliers, and  
33 the cascading effects in agricultural and timber communities as the  
34 thousands of direct and indirect jobs that rely on robust  
35 agricultural exports are jeopardized;

36       NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that the  
37 federal government generally, and the Secretary of the United States  
38 Department of Agriculture specifically, do everything in its ability  
39 to minimize the impacts of recent changes in port operations on  
40 Washington's agriculture, food, and timber industries, the individual

1 Washingtonians who rely on those industries to feed, shelter, and  
2 educate their families, and the communities in which they live, and  
3 further, to take all necessary and prudent steps to return reliable,  
4 affordable, efficient, and consistent access for agriculture to the  
5 west coast ports.

6 BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately  
7 transmitted to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United  
8 States, the Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary of the United States  
9 Department of Agriculture, the President of the United States Senate,  
10 the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and each member of  
11 Congress from the State of Washington.

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