

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 16, 2025

The Honorable Howard Lutnick
Secretary of Commerce
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Lutnick,

I write to express my serious concern regarding the recent announcement stating the intent to withdraw from the 2019 Tomato Suspension Agreement (TSA) on April 14, 2025, which would impose a 21% duty on imports of tomatoes from Mexico.¹ I ask that you recognize the impact this action will have on American families' ability to afford groceries at a time of high inflation and I urge you to reverse course to maintain this agreement.

This trade agreement has set a fair price for the sale of imported tomatoes in the U.S. market for nearly 30 years, ensuring Americans have access to fresh tomatoes at a low, stable price all year-round. As you know, your Department and USDA rigorously enforce the 2019 TSA through quarterly audits, administrative reviews, and on-site audits. As of April 2025, the Departments have found that over 99.99% of tomato shipments from Mexico are in compliance with the TSA.²

This agreement is particularly necessary to meet the growing consumer demand for tomatoes and supplement domestic supply in winter months. The result of terminating this agreement will be higher prices for American families, fewer options at the grocery store, and fewer American jobs. Indeed, studies show that families could see tomato prices rise by an average of 50% if your Department does not reverse course.³ And, as Mexican growers see reduced demand in the United States, they will likely choose to grow more profitable crops and limit their tomato supply, limiting variety for American consumers in grocery stores and possibly causing shortages.

Extremely importantly for Arizona border communities, the tomato supply chain from Mexico supports 33,000 American jobs, including grocers, truckers, restaurant staff, warehouse operators, and others who move fresh tomatoes from the Nogales Port to American consumers.⁴ The termination of this agreement puts these good-paying jobs at risk. Moreover, a study from ASU found that eliminating this agreement would reduce Arizona state tax revenue by \$123.3

¹ <https://www.trade.gov/press-release/us-department-commerce-announces-intent-withdraw-2019-suspension-agreement-fresh>

² https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/TSA_Inspection_Data_Report.pdf

³ https://www.freshfrommexico.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Mexican_Tomatoes_Tariff_Analysis_2023-Report-V4.-updated-redaction.pdf

⁴ <https://cdn.freshfrommexico.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/29163050/FPAA-Tomatoes-Brochure-FINAL-2-8-201821.pdf>

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million and reduce county tax revenue by \$15.8 million. In all, eliminating this agreement would reduce economic activity in Arizona by \$3.4 billion.⁵

As a Senator representing Yuma, Arizona, a county that produces 90% of the lettuce consumed in the United States, I wholeheartedly support expanding our domestic agriculture industry and protecting American growers. However, trade policies must be rational. The United States simply does not have the climate to produce many of the tomato varieties produced in Mexico in sufficient locations to meet the consumer demand in the United States year-round. Tomato imports from Mexico also serve as an important shock-absorber that protects families from massive price fluctuations and shortages when the American market is not able to produce tomatoes. For example, in 2023, Florida suffered \$1.2 billion in crop losses linked to hurricanes, flooding, and droughts.⁶ Prices would have soared even higher had it not been for these imports.

Americans are correct to be angry with billionaire-backed trade deals of the past that have shipped good-paying jobs overseas. Our trade policies should be focused on bringing manufacturing back to the U.S., supporting the working class, and growing industries like semiconductor manufacturing, battery manufacturing, and more to create a prosperous future for all Americans. Ending the TSA does not accomplish those goals – it simply spikes food prices at a time when American families are feeling squeezed by costs and puts jobs at risk in Arizona border communities.

I urge you to reverse the decision and reinstate the Tomato Suspension Agreement.

Sincerely,



Ruben Gallego
United States Senator

⁵ <https://www.thepacker.com/news/produce-crops/study-end-suspension-agreement-will-drive-consumer-tomato-prices>

⁶ <https://www.fb.org/market-intel/major-disasters-and-severe-weather-caused-over-21-billion-in-crop-losses-in-2023>