

February 21, 2024

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

**RE: Fiscal Year 2024 Appropriations**

Dear Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Mr. Speaker, and Leader Jeffries:

The undersigned livestock groups write in strong support of Section 737 of H.R. 4368. Our organizations represent farmers and ranchers who would be significantly adversely impacted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) proposed and forthcoming rules ("the Rules") under the Packers and Stockyards Act of 1921 ("the Act"). As such, we urge Congress to protect livestock and poultry raisers by retaining this important provision in Fiscal Year 2024 appropriations.

For decades and, in some cases, centuries, our grassroots organizations have been trusted as the leading voices for our respective industries and those who make their living therein. Together, we represent hundreds of thousands of hardworking American farmers and ranchers who know firsthand the inevitable harm which the Rules would bring to their family agricultural operations.

Livestock and meat markets are immensely complex. It is precisely this complexity that allows individuals to carve out niches for themselves and earn higher rates of return for investments made in their production practices. In a game of ever-shrinking margins, such as production agriculture, any opportunity to capture extra value at the point of sale becomes a critical component of profitability. If allowed to take effect, the Rules would incentivize frivolous litigation which would necessarily result in reduced opportunities to access these essential marketing channels. The entirety of the meat supply chains would be negatively affected by this outcome, but none more so than farmers and ranchers.

Congress has previously heeded the warnings of American agriculture on this issue. Beginning in Fiscal Year 2012, a previous iteration of the Rules was defunded through the appropriations process with bipartisan support. Further, the central tenet of the Rules has been tried in eight separate federal circuit courts—each and every time, the judiciary has ruled against USDA and reaffirmed the intent of Congress that violations of the Act require a demonstration of competitive harm. Additional background information on the Rules and a summary of their legislative, regulatory, and judicial histories is available in the attachment.

In summary, the Rules would cause immense harm to the very farmers and ranchers they purport to help. We urge you to stand up for your farming and ranching constituents by continuing to support the inclusion of Section 737 in the final Fiscal Year 2024 appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

[Signatories listed on the following page]

National Cattlemen's Beef Association  
National Pork Producers Council  
Alabama Pork Producers (Alabama Farmers Federation)  
Arizona Cattle Feeders Association  
Arkansas Pork Producers Association  
California Cattlemen's Association  
Colorado Cattlemen's Association  
Colorado Livestock Association  
Colorado Pork Producers Council  
Florida Cattlemen's Association  
Georgia Cattlemen's Association  
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council  
Idaho Cattle Association  
Illinois Pork Producers Association  
Indiana Beef Cattle Association  
Indiana Pork Producers Association  
Iowa Pork Producers Association  
Kansas Livestock Association  
Kansas Pork Association  
Kentucky Cattlemen's Association  
Kentucky Pork Producers Association  
Louisiana Cattlemen's Association  
Louisiana Pork Producers Association  
Michigan Pork Producers Association  
Minnesota Pork Producers Association  
Minnesota State Cattlemen's Association  
Missouri Pork Association  
Montana Pork Producers Council  
Montana Stockgrowers Association  
Nebraska Cattlemen  
Nebraska Pork Producers Association, Inc.  
Nevada Cattlemen's Association  
New York Pork Producers Co-op  
North Carolina Cattlemen's Association  
North Carolina Pork Council  
North Dakota Pork Council  
Ohio Cattlemen's Association  
Ohio Pork Council  
Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association  
Oklahoma Pork Council  
Oregon Cattlemen's Association  
Oregon Pork Producers  
Pennsylvania Pork Producers Council  
South Dakota Cattlemen's Association  
South Dakota Pork Producers Council  
Tennessee Cattlemen's Association  
Tennessee Pork Producers Association  
Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association  
Texas Cattle Feeders Association  
Utah Cattlemen's Association  
Utah Pork Producers

Virginia Pork Council, Inc.  
Washington Cattle Feeders Association  
Washington Cattlemen's Association  
West Virginia Cattlemen's Association  
Wisconsin Pork Association  
Wyoming Pork Producers Council  
Wyoming Stockgrowers Association

CC: The Honorable Patty Murray  
The Honorable Kay Granger  
The Honorable Susan Collins  
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
The Honorable Martin Heinrich  
The Honorable John Hoeven  
The Honorable Andy Harris  
The Honorable Sanford Bishop