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Dairy Groups Urge Quick Congressional Action on New TPA Legislation

The National Milk Producers Federation and the U.S. Dairy Export Council today urged the Senate and House to act quickly on new Trade Promotion Authority legislation, saying the measure is crucial to securing well-negotiated trade agreements that open foreign markets to more U.S. dairy products.

The bipartisan TPA legislation was introduced today in the Senate by Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and senior committee Democrat Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR), and in the House by Ways and Means Committee Chairman Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI).

NMPF and USDEC said renewing TPA, which expired in 2007, is particularly important to the U.S. dairy industry because America now exports the equivalent of one-seventh of its milk production. TPA is the key to unlocking future export opportunities, the groups said.

“Because world trade has become a major driver of U.S. dairy farmer income, we need well-designed free trade agreements to keep expanding our exports,” said NMPF President and CEO Jim Mulhern. “All of the past trade agreements that were well-negotiated have been beneficial to the U.S. dairy industry. None of those have been implemented without Congress first approving trade negotiating authority.”

Added USDEC President Tom Suber: “Knowing that a trade agreement will be considered by Congress under trade promotion authority paves the way to press our negotiating partners to make their best offers on the most sensitive issues.



Clearly, dairy exports fall into that category and the U.S. needs all the tools it can muster to get the best possible deal.”

The two organizations said TPA also allows U.S. negotiators to prioritize negotiations about products that are subject to significantly higher tariffs in key foreign markets. “This is extremely important for our industry since foreign dairy tariffs are often extremely high,” said Mulhern.

Finally, NMPF and USDEC said TPA will increase congressional influence over trade negotiations and lead to agreements that are better for both the country and the dairy industry. “By having a framework for participating in the process and clearly identified priorities, Congress increases its influence over these agreements as they are being written,” said Suber.

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The National Milk Producers Federation, based in Arlington, Va., develops and carries out policies that advance the well-being of U.S. dairy producers and the cooperatives they collectively own. The members of NMPF's cooperatives produce the majority of the U.S. milk supply, making NMPF the voice of nearly 32,000 dairy producers on Capitol Hill and with government agencies. For more on NMPF's activities, visit www.nmpf.org.

The U.S. Dairy Export Council is a non-profit, independent membership organization that represents the global trade interests of U.S. dairy producers, proprietary processors and cooperatives, ingredient suppliers and export traders. Its mission is to enhance U.S. global competitiveness and assist the U.S. industry to increase its global dairy ingredient sales and exports of U.S. dairy products. USDEC accomplishes this through programs in market development that build global demand for U.S. dairy products, resolve market access barriers and advance industry trade policy goals. USDEC is supported by staff across the United States and overseas in Mexico, South America, Asia, Middle East and Europe. The U.S. Dairy Export Council prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, disability, national origin, race, color, religion, creed, gender, sexual orientation, political beliefs, marital status, military status, and arrest or conviction record. www.usdec.org