



MARITIME EXCHANGE

for the Delaware River and Bay

Leading the Way to Port Progress

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The Honorable Lisa R. Barton
Secretary of the Commission
United States International Trade Commission
Washington D.C.

Dear Secretary Barton:

This letter will outline the rationale for our strong opposition to any Section 201 safeguard measures in response to increased blueberry imports.

The 300 Maritime Exchange members strongly support the importation of fresh and frozen blueberries into the U.S. Delaware River ports in Delaware, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey have the distinction of being the largest ports of entry for blueberries in the U.S., activity that brings over \$480 million to the local economy and supports nearly 2,000 direct jobs. The majority of that fruit then moves throughout the Eastern U.S. to grateful consumers who desire berries and other fresh fruits all year round.

As the global safeguard investigation continues, please keep in mind that international trade is not only critical to the U.S. food supply but also enables the U.S. and global agricultural industry to meet consumer demand. A clear example were the market disruptions — felt particularly in the maritime industry — seen at the onset of the COVID-19 crisis that put the fragility of our supply chain in the spotlight and jeopardized our collective ability to maintain our quality of life. The ongoing partnerships strengthened through international supply chains ensure a continuous, reliable food supply for all Americans. The relationship between the Delaware River port community and Chilean exporters, for example, goes back nearly 45 years.

Most importantly, many U.S.-grown fruits and vegetables are simply unavailable during certain months. Given the increasing consumer focus on healthier diets, it is no surprise that demand for imported blueberries, which complement the domestic market, is on the rise.

Any increase in blueberry imports represents neither interference with nor threat to the U.S. blueberry industry; rather, it reflects growing consumer demand. Further it is important to realize that actions taken on behalf of the U.S. blueberry industry can severely imperil another U.S. industry: the hundreds of thousands of men and women who earn their livelihoods at our nation's seaports.

Thank you for your consideration of our views. Please feel free to contact me at 267-670-7945 should you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

Dennis Rochford
President

cc: Lisa Himer