

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 21, 2024

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

Last month, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced the first tranche of allocations under the Regional Agricultural Promotion Program (RAPP). According to USDA, RAPP is intended to build demand for American agricultural exports in high-potential markets around the globe. Therefore, we were disappointed to see the U.S. pecan industry receive a woefully inadequate allocation under this program.

As you know, Georgia growers lead the nation in pecan production, helping make the United States the world's leading producer of pecans. The United States makes up 80 percent of the global pecan industry; 28 percent of U.S. pecans are exported to the world market.¹ In recent years, more than half of our pecan exports have gone to Mexico and China, highlighting the potential to diversify and increase export opportunities.²

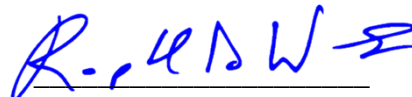
That is why we successfully pushed the Republic of India to cut its tariff on U.S. pecan exports by 70 percent, opening up a market of more than one billion consumers to premium Georgia-grown pecans. In 2022, the United States exported more than \$1.3 million of pecans to India. As a result of our successful efforts, USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service projects that pecan exports to India could now reach up to \$5 million annually.³

However, USDA must provide adequate support to the pecan industry in order to fully realize this opportunity. Therefore, as you consider future allocations through the Regional Agricultural Promotion Program and other agricultural export support programs, such as the Market Access Program, we urge you to give the fullest consideration to products like pecans, which have enormous potential to support the growth of American agricultural exports to countries around the world.

Sincerely,



Jon Ossoff
United States Senator



Reverend Raphael Warnock
United States Senator

¹ Agricultural Marketing Resource Center, <https://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/nuts/pecans>.

² USDA Economic Research Service, https://data.ers.usda.gov/reports.aspx?programArea=fruit&top=5&HardCopy=True&RowsPerPage=25&groupName=Tree%20nuts&commodityName=Pecans&ID=17851#P3f56190d221b4ee480bd86469f698677_2_828.

³ Foreign Agricultural Service, <https://fas.usda.gov/data/india-success-story-its-been-tough-nut-crack-india-all-pecans-tariff-reduction>.