

United States Senate

October 6, 2023

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

We write to you in support of domestic apple growers and urge the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to purchase \$34.7 million worth of processed apple products utilizing Section 32 purchasing authority or other appropriate authorities to address this growing need.

Michigan is the nation's third-largest producer of apples, with more than 14.9 million apple trees covering 34,500 acres across 775 family farms. The average Michigan apple crop is approximately 24 million bushels, but in 2022, growers in our state harvested a record-breaking crop exceeding 32 million bushels. As our growers face significant stock surpluses from the previous harvest, the 2023 harvest will place additional strain on already fragile supply chains. Production for the current crop year is also expected to surpass average levels, reaching around 32 million bushels once again. This increasing pressure on the industry comes at a time when growers are coping with elevated input costs and persistent challenges securing workers for demanding on-farm jobs.

Thank you for your timely consideration of this important request to support the U.S. apple industry. We look forward to continuing to work with you on this matter, and please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or to request further clarification on issues facing Michigan apple growers.

Sincerely,



Debbie Stabenow
U.S. Senator



Gary Peters
U.S. Senator