



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Keith Chu (202) 224-4515

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## **Wyden Statement at Finance Committee Open Executive Session to Consider Chief Agricultural Negotiator** *As Prepared for Delivery*

The Finance Committee meets this morning to vote on the nomination of Mr. Doug McKalip to serve as the Chief Agricultural Negotiator within the Office of the United States Trade Representative.

First, a word on Mr. McKalip's extensive qualifications for this job. Doug McKalip is a public servant with nearly 30 years of experience in roles focused on ag policy and helping rural America get ahead. He's currently a top advisor to Agriculture Secretary Vilsack on trade, ag safety, national security and a host of other issues. His experience includes several other leadership positions at the Department of Agriculture and with the Domestic Policy Council. There's no doubt that he'll be ready to step in and succeed as Chief Ag Negotiator on day one, and he's sure to be busy.

These days Americans are paying more for their groceries but getting less, and our farms and ranches are getting clobbered by inflation and drought. Americans aren't alone in dealing with these crises. Amid a pandemic, war and climate change, food is in short supply around the world.

Smart trade policy is one important solution to hunger in the 21st century — a policy that promotes affordable, abundant food here at home and abroad. That policy must lower costs for our farmers, bust through trade barriers and help distribute more American ag exports. Mr. McKalip will lead those efforts as our top ag negotiator.

He'll also help address other key issues, including areas where trade enforcement needs a boost. For example, Canada is propping up barriers to our dairy products. Mexico is unfairly blocking American-grown corn and soybeans. The Trump administration negotiated a flimsy agreement for the Chinese government to buy more American ag products, but China is bringing in only a fraction of the totals it agreed to.

Doug McKalip is a strong choice to take on these challenges as our top trade advocate for American agriculture. He has fans on both sides of this committee, and we expect to work closely with him once he's confirmed and on the job.

I urge all my colleagues to join me in supporting his nomination today.

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