

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 19, 2018

The Honorable Pat Roberts
Chairman
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
U.S. Senate
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Michael Conaway
Chairman
Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
U.S. Senate
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Collin Peterson
Ranking Member
Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Roberts and Conaway and Ranking Members Stabenow and Peterson:

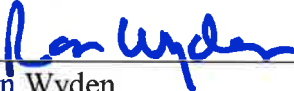
Thank you for your continuing efforts to reach an agreement on the contents of the final 2018 Farm Bill. As part of that effort, we ask that you maintain provisions in Section 12620 of the Senate bill to address the threats of powdery mildew and downy mildew on hop production.

Powdery mildew (caused by the pathogen *Podosphaera macularis*) and downy mildew (caused by *Pseudoperonospora humuli*) are the costliest diseases faced by the U.S. hop industry. The growing popularity of planting Cascade hop varieties has facilitated the spread of powdery mildew fungus and allowed it to develop greater virulence in the last four years. Now, studies have confirmed that Cascade-virulent strains of the fungus are present throughout the Pacific Northwest. This threat means the signature hop used in a very large number of craft beers is in danger of losing its resistance to a very common and costly disease. This development could lead to decreased yields for farmers, as well as higher prices and lower quality hops for the growing craft brewing industry.


Section 12620 in the Senate Farm Bill addresses these threats by explicitly authorizing the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s Agricultural Research Service (ARS) to work on ways to address powdery and downy mildew. Through superior hop cultivar development and the incorporation of successful integrated pest management strategies, the ARS hop research program will ensure the U.S. hop grower remains competitive in the world hop market.

Thank you for your continuing efforts to bring the Farm Bill across the finish line. I appreciate your leadership and look forward to working with you to support our nation's farmers in the future.


Sincerely,




Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Cory Gardner
United States Senator

CC: House and Senate Farm Bill Conferees