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March 12, 2018

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States of America  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

On behalf of the American Soybean Association (ASA), I am writing to express our concern with the potential consequences of the tariffs you are preparing to impose on imported steel and aluminum. We believe this action could result in retaliation against exports of U.S. soybeans by other countries, and particularly China. We urge you to modify if not reverse your decision to avoid a trade war that could seriously undermine our industry, which is highly dependent on trade. ASA is the national trade association that represents U.S. soybean farmers on domestic and international issues.

Soybean farmers have worked with the U.S. Department of Agriculture for 60 years to develop foreign markets for soybean meal and oil. As world demand for meat, fish and cooking oil has grown, U.S. soybean production and exports have responded. In 2017, U.S. farmers produced a record 4.4 billion bushels of soybeans and exported over 2.3 billion bushels, or 52 percent, valued at \$27 billion. For the last 20 years, soybeans have contributed more to the U.S. trade balance than any other agricultural product. We are very proud of this record, and of our role in helping to feed a growing world.

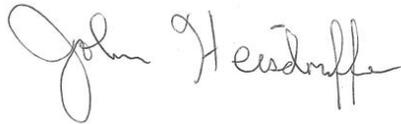
In the last ten years, China has become by far the largest customer for U.S. soybeans. In 2017, China imported 1.4 billion bushels from the U.S., 61 percent of our total exports and nearly one out of every three rows of soybean production. The importance of the China market in sustaining our livelihoods and our industry's role in the Nation's agricultural and rural economy cannot be overstated.

It has been argued that trade in agricultural products is fungible, and that the loss of one market to a competitor will be replaced by other markets which that competitor will no longer sell to. In the case of soybeans, this argument fails to recognize that our largest competitor, Brazil, is continuing to expand soybean production on new lands. Brazil is already the world's largest soybean exporter, including to China, and would respond quickly in the event U.S. trade actions trigger retaliation against our soybean exports. We simply cannot accept the risk that a trade war would create for our industry.

As an export-driven industry, we believe agriculture can make a powerful contribution to reducing the Nation's trade deficit if the Administration pursues policies that enhance our competitiveness rather than reduce our access to foreign markets. Your plan to rebuild our national infrastructure is one of these policies. Please consider meeting with us and other successful export-driven agricultural industries to discuss how we can work together to achieve our common goal of reducing our national trade imbalance.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Heisdorffer". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

John Heisdorffer  
President

cc. The Honorable Sonny Perdue, Secretary of Agriculture  
The Honorable Wilbur Ross, Secretary of Commerce  
Ambassador Robert E. Lighthizer, United States Trade Representative  
Raymond A. Starling, National Economic Council