

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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120 HUYSHOPE AVENUE  
SUITE 401  
HARTFORD, CT 06106  
(860) 549-8463

<http://murphy.senate.gov>

Michael Young  
Acting Deputy Secretary of Agriculture  
United States Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

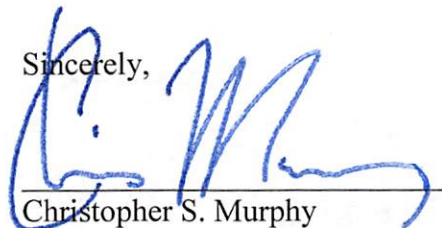
Dear Acting Deputy Secretary Young,

I write to you today, as a new administration begins and farmers and greenhouse growers enter a busy Valentine's Day season, to ask for your continued support of the American horticulture industry. In 2015, there were \$31.3 billion in floriculture sales in the U.S. and top producing states saw increases in the number of producers<sup>1</sup>. In my home state of Connecticut, over 1,700 nurseries collectively gross more than \$800 million annually for the farming, sale, and maintenance of fresh flowers and plants. Across the state, garden centers, landscapers, perennial growers, and landscape designers employ 30,000 people<sup>2</sup>.

The vast majority of cut flowers are imported from countries such as the Netherlands, Colombia, Ethiopia, Ecuador, India, South Africa, Australia, Thailand, Kenya, and Israel, despite the presence of over 60,000 floral businesses nationwide. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Economic Research Service projects horticultural imports will reach a record level of \$53.3 billion in 2017<sup>3</sup>. The practice of relying on foreign growers not only disadvantages American farmers and businesses, but it is expensive and resource-intensive. In order to keep the product fresh, flowers are transported in a highly energy-intensive process involving refrigeration during flights to the U.S. and ground transport on cooled trucks.

Moving forward there are numerous ways USDA can continue to support the American floriculture industry such as featuring American flowers at government events, launching public relations campaigns, and reaching out to growers and businesses to hear about the challenges they face. I hope you will continue to support buying American grown products and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator

<sup>1</sup> Agricultural Marketing Resource Center. (April 2016). Floriculture. Retrieved February 13, 2017, from <http://www.agmrc.org/commodities-products/specialty-crops/floriculture/>

<sup>2</sup> CT Nursery & Landscape Association. (n.d.). About Us. Retrieved February 13, 2017, from <http://cnla.biz/>

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service. Outlook for U.S. Agricultural Trade. (November 2016). Retrieved February 13, 2017, from <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/international-markets-trade/us-agricultural-trade/outlook-for-us-agricultural-trade/>