

October 8, 2009

The Honorable Blanche Lincoln  
Chairman  
Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Lincoln:

As the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee continues to evaluate the opportunities and challenges of climate change policies for American agriculture, we would like to call your attention to the lack of economic analysis that has been generated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture regarding the specialty crop industry.

Currently, the specialty crop industry in the U.S. comprises over fifty percent of total plant crop value at the farm gate. However, despite the huge economic impact of this portion of the industry, USDA's climate change analyses have been relatively non-existent as compared to many of the other crops.

The specialty crop industry in the U.S. is particularly focused on the climate change debate. Whether cooled continuously from harvest to consumption, propagated and maintained in greenhouse structures, or subject to processing and distribution demands, these products carry a unique and continuous energy burden throughout the supply chain. Therefore, modifications to the cost of energy can have a profound impact upon the price of these products.

In the interest of accurately assessing the costs and benefits of climate change policies, we respectfully request that you encourage USDA to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of the economic impact of various policy options upon the specialty crop sector of American agriculture.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,  
American Mushroom Institute  
American Nursery and Landscape Association  
Blue Diamond Growers  
California Citrus Mutual  
California Grape and Tree Fruit League  
California Association of Winegrape Growers  
Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association  
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives  
National Potato Council  
Produce Marketing Association  
Society of American Florists  
United Fresh Produce Association  
U.S. Apple Association  
Western Growers