



NEWS RELEASE

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United Fresh Member Maureen Torrey Gives First-hand Perspective on Ag Needs to President Trump and Secretary Perdue

WASHINGTON, D.C. (April 26, 2017) – Yesterday, United Fresh member and former Chairman of the Board Maureen Torrey with Torrey Farms of Elba, NY, participated in a roundtable discussion at the White House with President Trump and Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue regarding the policy needs of rural America and the agriculture industry. The meeting set the stage for the President’s Executive Order, also signed yesterday, that establishes an interagency task force to examine a wide range of issues affecting the quality of life in rural America. Specifically, according to the White House, “The task force is ordered to identify legislative, regulatory, or policy changes to promote American agriculture, economic development, job growth, infrastructure improvements, technological innovation, energy security, and quality of life in rural America.” The task force is set to convene within the coming weeks.

With respect to the meeting that coincided with the signing of the Executive Order, Torrey reported that the roundtable discussion with President Trump, Secretary Perdue and farmers from across the country was productive and covered a significant number of topics important to the fresh fruit and vegetable industry. The President was “engaged and made it clear that he expects Secretary Perdue to be very active in addressing agriculture’s policy priorities,” said Torrey. Among the policy initiatives the President and the Secretary addressed were: ag labor, regulations, trade and infrastructure. Torrey also added, “I believe the President appreciates how important agriculture is to the overall well-being of this country. He said that he understands how important it is for farmers to be viable in the marketplace and it was encouraging to hear him tell Secretary Perdue that, with respect to immigration enforcement, workers who are here and have not caused any problems, but have been productive workers, should not have anything to fear. I was also pleased to hear him acknowledge that the current federal ag guest worker program, H-2A, is broken and needs fixing. It was also good to hear him say that there needs to be a year-round solution to agriculture’s labor needs and to hear him talk about the need for a skilled ag worker program.”

The Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity will consist of representatives of agencies across the federal government and is required to issue its recommendations within 180 days of the signing of the Executive Order. Robert Guenther, Senior Vice President for Public Policy said, “This initiative has got the potential to have a tremendous impact on the ability of fresh fruit and vegetable providers to be in business. That’s why United Fresh will be engaging with the Task Force and other policymakers and officials to ensure the priorities of the fresh produce industry are part of the Task Force Report.”

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About United Fresh Produce Association

Founded in 1904, the United Fresh Produce Association serves companies at the forefront of the global fresh and fresh-cut produce industry, including growers, shippers, fresh-cut processors, wholesalers, distributors, retailers, foodservice operators, industry suppliers and allied associations. From its headquarters in Washington, D.C. and Western Regional office in Salinas, Calif., United Fresh and its members work year-round to make a difference for the produce industry by driving policies that increase consumption of fresh produce, shaping critical legislative and regulatory action, providing scientific and technical leadership in food safety, quality assurance, nutrition and health, and developing educational programs and business opportunities to assist member companies in growing successful businesses. For more information, visit www.unitedfresh.org or call 202-303-3400.