

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 28, 2010

Secretary Tom Vilsack  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Suite 200-A Whitten Building  
1400 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

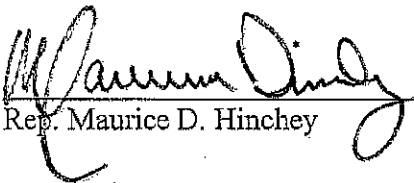
Next month representatives from USDA's Animal Plant Health Inspection Service will be meeting in Kona, Hawaii to discuss U.S.-China Phytosanitary Bilateral agreements. We understand the agenda for that meeting is still under discussion but could include China's request to export fresh apples to the U.S. We have serious concerns about the impact that fresh Chinese apples could have on U.S. apple growers and other industries. Given China's extremely poor track record of preventing the export of exotic insects and plant diseases into other countries and its ability to supply large amounts of apples to the U.S. at prices below the cost of production, any decisions with respect to allowing fresh Chinese apples into the U.S. must be deliberate and cautious.

As you know, China has a long history of exporting invasive species into the U.S. that have caused enormous damage to local industries, despite having approved sanitary-phytosanitary (SPS) import protocols in place. For example, the plant disease *Alternaria* was discovered on Chinese Ya Pears in 2004 after a leading apple pest researcher happened to discover this quarantine pest while shopping for pears at his local grocery store in Washington state.

APHIS has compiled a long list of pests and plant diseases present in Chinese apple production that currently do not exist in the U.S. We understand this list may be shared with Chinese officials at these upcoming talks. Before the agenda for this bilateral meeting is finalized, and in particular before any decision is made with respect to sharing APHIS's current list of Chinese apple pests, we respectfully request a staff briefing from the appropriate APHIS officials to discuss the status of this issue and concerns we are hearing from local growers.

Thank you for your consideration. Please coordinate with Rep. Maurice D. Hinchey's office to schedule this staff briefing.

Sincerely,

  
Rep. Maurice D. Hinchey



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Dan Maffei

Rep. Daniel B. Maffei

Chuck Schumer

Senator Charles E. Schumer

Michael A. Arcuri

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