

JAMES LANKFORD
OKLAHOMA

COMMITTEES:
FINANCE
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GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1904

WASHINGTON, DC OFFICE
316 HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
(202) 224-5754
OKLAHOMA CITY OFFICE
1015 NORTH BROADWAY AVENUE, SUITE 210
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73102
(405) 231-4941
TULSA OFFICE
401 SOUTH BOSTON AVENUE, SUITE 2150
TULSA, OK 74103
(918) 581-7651

September 13, 2021

The Honorable Katherine Tai
U.S. Trade Representative
600 17th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20508

Dear Ambassador Tai,

I write to you in support of our nation's robust trading relationship with the Republic of Iraq. Iraq has nearly 40 million citizens, and its domestic agricultural industry is struggling to produce sufficient amounts of food to feed its booming population. American agricultural producers are eager and able to meet this demand, which is why I urge you to work with the Government of Iraq to build on our existing trade agreements and expand our cooperation.

Iraq's economy contracted in 2020 due to challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the global decline in oil prices, and federal budget woes. As you may know, Iraq is currently experiencing a shortage of critical commodities like wheat and rice due to a smaller than expected harvest season. As such, Iraq is in need of reliable trade partners who can meet their supply needs. This presents an opportunity for the U.S. to strengthen bilateral economic ties and boost American exports long-term. Iraq is heavily reliant on imports to meet its citizens' wheat needs, and I have heard from many producers in my state who are eager to increase their exports to the Iraqi market.

The Trump Administration prioritized our trading relationship with Iraq by holding Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) talks in 2019. These talks addressed U.S. wheat and rice exports to Iraq, as well as other opportunities for increased cooperation. I ask that you work with your Iraqi counterparts to convene another meeting of the United States-Iraq Trade and Investment Council with the aim of boosting agricultural exports to meet Iraq's domestic needs long-term. Our Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which provides US technical assistance to equip Iraq in procuring US-sourced commodities, would also be a useful tool to accomplish this objective. American exporters are well-positioned to supply Iraq with these resources in times of need.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

In God We Trust,



James Lankford
United States Senator

CC: The Honorable Matthew H. Tueller
U.S. Ambassador to Iraq
U.S. Embassy Baghdad
Al-Kindi Street
International Zone
Baghdad, Iraq