

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 19, 2024

Dr. Jennifer Tucker, Deputy Administrator
National Organic Program
Agricultural Marketing Service
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Dr. Jennifer Tucker,

As representatives of regions that include family-owned wine and spirits distributors and importers, we are writing to express our concerns regarding the implementation of the National Organic Program's (NOP) Strengthening Organic Enforcement (SOE) rule that took effect on March 19, 2024.

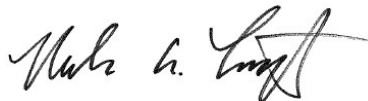
As you know, SOE requires importers of record of organic wine and spirits to obtain organic certification through a USDA-accredited certifier. It has come to our attention that many of these importers of record were previously exempted from certification prior to the implementation of SOE; particularly those whose primary function is the distribution of sealed, shelf-stable containers. While our constituents have made good faith efforts to learn whether the new rule applies to their operations and the associated requirements, many have encountered a waitlist delaying the certification process as certifiers have become inundated with new entities seeking organic certification.

We understand and appreciate your decision to grant a grace period that permits system allowances for importers who are in the process of obtaining certification until September 19, 2024. However, we have also been informed that many of the certifiers have a backlog that exceeds 4 months from the date of this writing.

We urge NOP to extend their grace period for an additional 120 days to allow ample opportunity for those who have submitted their applications in a timely manner, and are still waiting their turn in line with the certifying agent. This extension will help safeguard the uninterrupted international commerce of wines and spirits and protect the livelihoods of those who make it happen.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Respectfully,



Nicholas A. Langworthy
Member of Congress



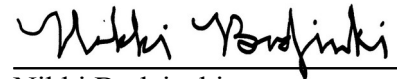
David Rouzer
Member of Congress



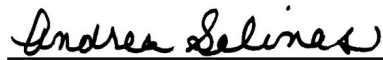
Kat Cammack
Member of Congress



Mark Alford
Member of Congress



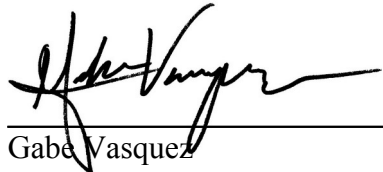
Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress



Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



Lori Chavez-DeRemer
Member of Congress



Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress



Yadira Caraveo, M.D.
Member of Congress