

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 3, 2015

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

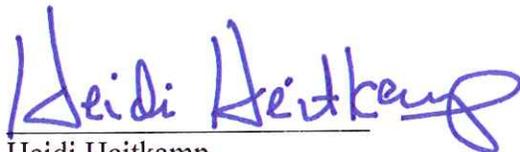
We write to urge you to use your authority under 7 U.S.C. 612c (Section 32) to provide needed assistance to our states' pinto bean growers. Dry bean production is vital to our states' economies, with 2,100 dry bean producers, 55 processors, and numerous dry bean marketing firms and equipment companies which depend on the dry bean industry.

In recent years, due to increased international competition and large harvests, dry bean producers have been unable to make a profit on their crops, and the prices paid to producers continues to fall further below the cost of production. Harvest is just around the corner, and this year's pinto bean crop, coupled with the carryover from 2014, will cause a serious oversupply. The specialty crop industry cannot continue to finance this oversupply, and this burden on producers will not only affect our producers' bottom lines, but the economies of our local communities and region.

It is imperative you act immediately and exercise your Section 32 authority and make purchases for surplus removal of pinto beans as soon as possible. Using part of the \$167.6 million remaining this fiscal year under Section 32, we can provide needed support to our growers, just as you provided support to lamb, apple, and grape producers so far this year. Nutrient rich pinto beans are well suited for use in the school lunch program. We also encourage you to make additional bonus purchases in the next fiscal year if warranted.

The success and job security of our dry bean farmers is of utmost importance to North Dakota and Minnesota. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,



Heidi Heitkamp



John Hoeven



Amy Klobuchar



Al Franken