



Washington Council on International Trade

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**WCIT Congratulates Secretary Perdue on His Confirmation**

SEATTLE – On Monday, the Washington Council on International Trade and its members – manufacturers, farmers, retailers and service providers from across Washington state – congratulated the new U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Perdue, on his confirmation.

“We extend heartfelt congratulations to Secretary Perdue, and we welcome the opportunity to work with him and his team at the Department of Agriculture to advance trade priorities that will benefit Washington’s many farmers, ranchers and food processors,” said Lori Otto Punke, president of WCIT. “Washington exported \$14.4 billion in agricultural products last year, which is second only to our aerospace exports. Much of what Washington grows is exported to foreign customers; for example, half of Washington’s potatoes and about 30 percent of our apples are exported. Our farmers and food processors have especially benefited from free trade agreements. For example, exports of Washington potato products to Korea increased by over 80 percent, and exports of cherries increased 200 percent after the Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement went into effect.

“We must make sure we continue to grow global market access for our agricultural products through new free trade agreements, and that our current trade agreements like NAFTA continue working for our exporters. We look forward to working with Secretary Perdue to ensure our nation’s trade policies benefit Washington’s agricultural producers.”

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**About the Washington Council on International Trade**

WCIT is the only organization in Washington dedicated exclusively to advocating for public policies that increase our state's international competitiveness. On behalf of its members — manufacturers, farmers, retailers and service providers – WCIT advocates for trade policies and investments that benefit Washington's workers and employers.

WCIT works to:

- **Evaluate** and share objective data on the impact of trade policies on Washington’s economy
- **Educate** our local, state and federal elected officials about the benefits of strong international trade policies and investments to Washington employers and residents
- **Engage** diverse stakeholders from across the state – including manufacturers, retailers, farmers and service providers - to drive policy changes that help them succeed in the global marketplace

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