

July 28, 2017

The Honorable Pat Roberts
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition
And Forestry
United States Senate
328-A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition
and Forestry
United States Senate
328-A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Roberts and Ranking Member Stabenow:

The undersigned national trade associations write to strongly support confirmation of Stephen Censky as Deputy Secretary at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Based on his extensive experience and detailed understanding of farm and agricultural policy from working in various capacities in the agriculture sector, and on his demonstrated leadership abilities, we believe Mr. Censky is highly qualified to undertake the responsibilities of this important position.

Currently the Chief Executive Officer of the American Soybean Association, a position he has held for 21 years, Steve has been involved in agriculture his entire life. He grew up on a family farm in western Minnesota, and earned his Bachelor's degree in agriculture at South Dakota State University. He served as an agricultural aide to Senator James Abdnor of South Dakota before completing his education with a postgraduate diploma in agricultural science from the University of Melbourne in Australia. Prior to joining ASA as International Marketing Director, Mr. Censky served in marketing and trade positions at the Department of Agriculture in the Reagan and George H.W. Bush Administrations, including as Acting Administrator of the Foreign Agricultural Service.

As CEO of ASA, Steve has acquired extensive experience in domestic and in international agricultural trade policy and issues. He has overseen ASA's participation in four farm bills, including provisions covering conservation, agricultural research and energy, as well as domestic farm support and export promotion programs. His background and expertise in agricultural trade programs and policies have made him a recognized leader in the private sector on negotiation of multilateral, regional and bilateral trade agreements.

As one of the first farm organizations to embrace commercialization of biotechnology products, ASA and Mr. Censky have been at the forefront of efforts to support the science-based adoption of new biotech products and plant breeding innovations, both in the U.S. and overseas. Steve has been particularly active in U.S. efforts to encourage the science-based acceptance of biotech products by China and the European Union on a more timely basis.

Mr. Censky's expertise and in-depth understanding of agricultural issues and policy has been recognized by both the U.S. government and in the private sector. He was appointed to successive terms as a member of the USDA-USTR Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee. He organized and provided leadership to the International Oilseed Producers Dialogue, and the U.S. Agricultural Export Development Council. He serves on the executive committee of the Coalition for Safe Affordable Food and as co-chair of the agriculture-based CEO Council.

As organizations that have known and worked closely with Steve Censky for most of his professional career, we can state unequivocally that he is well-qualified to serve as Deputy Secretary of Agriculture. We respectfully urge the Committee to take up his nomination at your earliest convenience so that it can be considered by the Senate and Mr. Censky can join Secretary Perdue in carrying out the important work of the Department of Agriculture.

We thank you in advance for your interest and support for Mr. Censky's nomination.

Sincerely yours,

American Beverage Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Pulse Association
American Seed Trade Association
American Soybean Association
American Sugar Alliance
Biotechnology Innovation Organization
Corn Refiners Association
Crop Insurance and Reinsurance Bureau
CropLife America
Farm Credit Council
Grocery Manufacturers Association
Growth Energy
International Dairy Foods Association
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Barley Growers Association
National Biodiesel Board
National Chicken Council
National Confectioners Association
National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Farmers Union
National Grain and Feed Association
National Grocers Association
National Oilseed Processors Association
National Pork Producers Council
National Potato Council
National Sorghum Producers
National Sunflower Association
National Turkey Federation
Produce Marketing Association
Renewable Fuels Association

Southern Peanut Farmers Federation
The Fertilizer Institute
United Egg Producers
USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council
USA Rice
U.S. Apple Association
U.S. Canola Association
U.S. Dry Bean Council
Western Growers Association

cc. Members, Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, United States Senate