



Office of the Secretary
Washington, DC 20250

September 9, 2024

THE HONORABLE JOHN BOOZMAN
United States Senate
555 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Boozman:

Thank you for your letter of July 16, 2024, cosigned by your colleagues, expressing concerns about potato imports from Prince Edward Island (PEI), Canada.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) remains committed to safeguarding the U.S. potato industry against the threat of potato wart, which is classified as both a Federal quarantine pest and an agricultural Select Agent. We also recognize the need for transparent, science- and risk-based regulation of foreign imports, consistent with our international trade obligations.

We appreciate your input on further mitigation measures—including the routine testing of PEI fields for potato wart. We included the strategies and concerns you, your colleagues, and industry representatives suggested in feedback to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), for further consideration as they develop their national potato wart management plan.

We recognize that the risks posed by plant diseases can be dynamic. In drafting the [Federal Order](#), USDA officials developed entry requirements that thoroughly address the risk of potato wart entering the United States. The Federal Order specifies that only potatoes for consumption may be imported from PEI under certain conditions. Among other requirements, these potatoes must be free of soil at inspection and cannot originate from fields restricted by CFIA for potato wart. PEI potatoes are also treated with a sprout inhibitor that prevents their use as seed for a period of time. These and other protective measures push the risk offshore and significantly reduce the risk of potato wart entering the United States. USDA continues to closely monitor and assess the pest risk. If we determine additional mitigation measures are necessary, we will update the Federal Order accordingly.

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Thank you for sharing your perspective. We will continue to work closely with CFIA to ensure compliance with our phytosanitary requirements and protect U.S. potato production. If you have additional questions, please have a member of your staff contact USDA's Office of Congressional Relations at (202) 720-7095 or ocr@usda.gov. We are sending a similar letter to your colleagues.

Sincerely,

THOMAS J. VILSACK
Secretary