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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

BARBARA CUBIN

WYOMING—AT LARGE

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The Honorable C. W. Young
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington D.C. 20515-6015

Dear Chairman Young:

I am writing to oppose the provision included in the Fiscal Year 2004 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies Appropriations measure that prohibits USDA from further implementing mandatory country of origin labeling for meat and meat products. **I respectfully request you vote to strike the provision to prohibit USDA from implementing mandatory country of origin labeling for meat and meat products.**

I strongly support the 130 Agricultural groups who oppose any provision which seeks to prevent country of origin labeling from being implemented. Our nation's farmers and ranchers produce the best and safest commodities in the world, and our nation's consumers want the ability to determine where their food is born, raised, and processed. Allowing the spending prohibition to remain in the appropriations bill may have the unintended consequence of jeopardizing both our domestic and foreign markets for meat and meat products, as well as causing the 2002 farm bill to be reopened. This is not an acceptable course of action.

The misinformation that has been spread by the opponents of mandatory country of origin labeling has created an exaggerated negative image of the labeling law, while failing to acknowledge its likely benefits. These scare tactics have distorted the debate, and should be avoided.

Country of origin labeling will allow consumers to make a choice on what type of meat they purchase for themselves and their families. It will allow U.S. producers to promote their own product and let the consumer decide which product to purchase. Given a choice, consumers will choose U.S. produced products at nearly every opportunity. Without mandatory country of origin labeling, consumers will be denied the ability to differentiate between U.S. and imported products.

With warm regards,

Barbara Cubin, M.C.