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**Letter, Bob Bergland, Secretary of Agriculture from David R.
Bowen, June 22, 1978**

David R. Bowen

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DAVID R. BOWEN
2d DISTRICT, MISSISSIPPI

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June 22, 1978

The Honorable Bob Bergland
Secretary of Agriculture
U. S. Department of Agriculture
14th and Independence, S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Secretary:

A report has recently come to me that some consideration is being given inside the Department to removing rice from the list of high priority commodities for which the United States is seeking concessions through the Multilateral Trade Negotiations. I am confident that you will not allow this to happen, Bob, but I did want to bring the matter very directly to your attention.

I understand that the Multilateral Trade Negotiations (MTN) are nearing completion in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). I am, as I know you are, keenly interested in successful negotiations on agricultural products in the MTN.

Rice growers throughout the nation are convinced that a major objective of the United States in the MTN should be to improve opportunities for U.S. rice exporters by reducing the level of governmental interference with the flow of rice in commerce, especially the use of the variable levy system imposed on U.S. rice exports by the European Economic Community (EEC).

The EEC is a major customer for U.S. rice exports and has a large potential for growth. United States participation in the EEC market, however, has been limited by onerous levels of import protection, as evidenced by the 54.1% ad valorem equivalent duty on rice over the 1967-1975 period. The EEC levies

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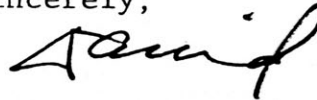
have also discriminated against U.S. long-grain rice, a product that is desired by EEC consumers and that is not currently being supplied in sufficient quantities by EEC producers.

I understand that the U.S. has requested a binding of the EEC variable levies on rice in order to have a stable, reasonable level of protection.

I appreciate your efforts to eliminate the EEC variable levy system on rice, and I want you to know that I will continue to be supportive of your efforts on rice in the MTN. Obviously, this is contingent upon our retaining rice as a high priority item on the U.S. request list in the Multilateral Trade Negotiations.

Bob, I am still convinced that we took the right action in defeating the Dole Bill, though I am catching a lot of flack from the AAM in Mississippi, who have endorsed my Republican opponent this fall.

Sincerely,



DAVID R. BOWEN
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Dale Hathaway