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# United States Senate

July 25, 2018

Peter Navarro  
White House Director of Trade and Industrial Policy  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Navarro:

I am concerned and disappointed by your recent characterization of the economic uncertainty harming American agriculture as nothing more than a “rounding error.” Your statement is inaccurate, insulting and dismissive of rural America, and it underscores Washington’s persistent misunderstanding of its people.

Farmers, ranchers, food producers and manufacturers in Montana and across rural America are feeling the sharp pain of your Administration’s ongoing trade disputes with trading partners around the world. What you dismiss as a “rounding error” are the bottom lines and livelihoods of millions of Americans who take pride in their work. I’ll always stick up for them when Washington takes rural America for granted as collateral damage.

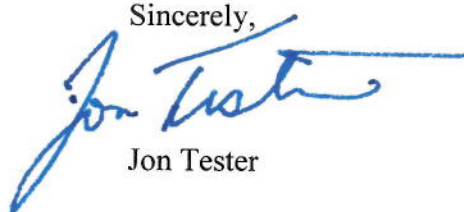
Our nation’s farmers and ranchers have seen commodity prices plummet and they continue to fear losing access to global markets for their products. They need certainty and honest leadership from Washington so they can compete fairly in the free market—so they can succeed, grow and make ends meet.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce reports this ongoing trade war will threaten \$20 million in Montana exports and it impacts 140,000 jobs in our state. Only in Washington, D.C., would this amount to a “rounding error.”

You also claimed there is no quantifiable evidence that your Administration’s tariffs are having a negative impact. As a third-generation farmer who farms the same land homesteaded by my grandparents, I can tell you firsthand that you are wrong. Don’t just take my word for it. Producers across my state consistently tell me that the uncertainty from these trade policies is absolutely hurting their pocketbooks and keeping them up at night. Farmers and ranchers are used to dealing with uncertainty every day; they don’t need the government making it worse.

I strongly urge you to leave the swamp of Washington to meet in person with agriculture producers who raise and grow and process the food that feeds our nation so you can understand why your “rounding error” comments are so out-of-touch.

Sincerely,



Jon Tester