

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 5, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

I write to express my strong support for the U.S.-South Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA). South Korea is a vital ally of the United States, and I believe withdrawing from the KORUS FTA at this time could inject instability into this critical alliance during a period in which solidarity is required. It would also negatively impact the U.S. economy.

As you know well, North Korea's belligerent actions have increased tensions on the Korean Peninsula to the highest levels in recent memory. As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I applaud the actions your administration has taken to signal its commitment to the Republic of Korea's security, but I also believe withdrawing from KORUS FTA now risks undermining those vital messages and could foster uncertainty in our friend and ally. I am additionally concerned that adversaries may interpret a withdrawal as evidence of division within our alliance with South Korea, and any doubt over the United States' commitment to this pact reduces its deterrent effect. During this challenging time, we must demonstrate solidarity with our allies as they face significant threats.

Moreover, the United States economy—specifically the production agriculture sector—greatly benefits from the KORUS FTA. With over 95 percent of the world's population living outside the borders of the United States, KORUS, and other similar FTAs, provide the best means to increase exponentially the demand for high-quality American agricultural products. For example, in 2016, South Korea served as our nation's fifth largest agricultural export market with a total of \$6.2 billion worth of American agricultural products being sold there.¹

Agriculture is the economic engine of Nebraska. However, the industry has recently fallen on hard times not only in my state, but across the nation. We are witnessing one of the toughest farm economies since the 1980s. America's farmers and ranchers face depressed commodity prices, high property taxes, and very tight margins. Trade agreements are important because they provide producers with reliable markets to sell their products, which allows them to provide for their families. Withdrawing from the historic KORUS FTA will have devastating economic consequences for the hard working men and women who devote their lives to feeding the world.

¹ <https://ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements/korus-fta>.

I respectfully request that the administration uphold the KORUS FTA. Doing so will demonstrate the commitment of the United States to stand by its longtime ally while continuing to provide steadfast global leadership in the region. Furthermore, maintaining the KORUS FTA will ensure that America's farmers and ranchers can continue providing safe, high-quality products to dinner tables around the world.

Sincerely,



Deb Fischer
United States Senator

CC: The Honorable Sonny Perdue, Secretary of Agriculture
Ambassador Robert E. Lighthizer, United States Trade Representative
Governor Pete Ricketts