

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

September 12, 2012

The Honorable Irving A. Williamson
Chairman
U.S. International Trade Commission
500 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20436

Dear Chairman Williamson:

The Committee on Ways and Means is interested in obtaining current information on the global competitiveness of the U.S. commercial olive oil industry. The U.S. commercial olive oil industry has grown rapidly over the last decade, employing modern agriculture technologies and research to capture the growing domestic demand for olive oil. The United States is the fourth largest market in terms of olive oil consumption. U.S. consumption of olive oil has increased approximately 40 percent in the past ten years. Although domestic production has increased, the vast majority of U.S. consumption is satisfied by imports.

In order to better assess the current market conditions confronting the U.S. industry, we request that the U.S. International Trade Commission conduct an investigation under section 332(g) of the Tariff Act of 1930 (19 U.S.C. §1332(g)) and provide a report setting forth the results of the investigation. The report should include, to the extent practicable, information and analysis regarding the major suppliers of olive oil, particularly Spain, Italy, and North African countries, in addition to the United States. A significant problem is the lack of information about the commercial olive oil industry of certain major supplier countries to the U.S. market. Special effort should be made to collect data about the major supplier countries of olive oil that have little published historical data.

To the extent that information is publicly available, the report should contain:

- an overview of the commercial olive oil industry in the United States and major supplier countries, including production of olives for olive oil processing, planted acreage and new plantings, processing volumes, processing capacity, carry-over inventory, and consumption;
- information on the international market for olive oil, including U.S. and foreign supplier imports and exports of olive oil in its various forms, olive oil trade between the European

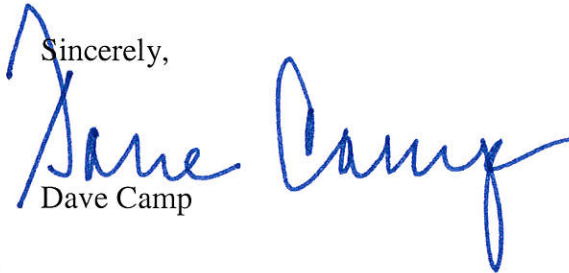
Union and North African countries, and a history of the tariff treatment and classification of olive oil in the United States and major supplier countries;

- a qualitative and, to the extent possible, quantitative assessment of the role of imports, standards and grading, prices, and other factors on olive oil consumption in the U.S. market; and
- a comparison of the competitive strengths and weaknesses of the commercial olive production and olive oil processing industries in the major producing countries and the United States, including factors such as industry structure, input production costs and availability, processing technology, product innovation, government support and other government intervention, exchange rates, and pricing and marketing regimes, plus the steps each respective industry is taking to increase its competitiveness.

The report should focus primarily on the 2008-2012 time period. The Committee requests that the Commission transmit its report to Congress no later than 11 months following the receipt of this request. It is the Committee's intent to make the Commission's report available to the public in its entirety. Therefore, the report should not include any confidential business information.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Dave Camp

Cc: Rep. Sandy Levin, Ranking Member