

U.S. Rice Industry Applauds Cuba Agricultural Trade And Travel Bill

Measure Would Help Feed Cuban Families, Boost U.S. Rice Exports

ARLINGTON, VA.

The USA Rice Federation praised House Agriculture Committee Chairman Collin Peterson (D-MN) who introduced legislation that would expand U.S. agricultural exports to Cuba. The bipartisan bill, co-sponsored by Rep. Jerry Moran (R-KS), would correct the Office of Foreign Asset Control interpretation of the “payment in advance” rule for shipment of agricultural products to Cuba and permit direct payments from Cuban to U.S. financial institutions for U.S. agricultural exports. The bill would also allow for general travel by Americans to Cuba.

Rice-state co sponsors of the legislation, which would likely prompt a significant increase in U.S. rice exports to Cuba, include Reps. Jim Costa (D-CA), Mike Ross, (D-AR), Marion Berry (D-AR), Charles Boustany (R-LA), Travis Childers (D-MS), Jo Ann Emerson (R-MO), Mike

Snyder (D-AR).

“USA Rice Federation has proactively worked for the past 15 years to remove agricultural trade barriers with Cuba,” said USA Rice Federation President and CEO Betsy Ward. “Cuba has the potential to be a 400,000 – 600,000 metric ton market for U.S. rice and we applaud Chairman Peterson’s proposed legislation, which would not only provide Cubans with more of the rice they have said they prefer, but would also help boost the U.S. economy,” Ward added.

Because of the current “payment in advance” rules and other restrictions and limitations on Cuba, the island nation currently imports much of its rice from Vietnam, rather than from the United States, which is just 90 miles away. Expanding U.S. agricultural trade with Cuba would significantly shorten the amount of time it takes to get rice into the country. Δ



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