

U.S. senators introduce bipartisan bill to help farmers export to Cuba



Washington D.C., May 15 (RHC)— The Engage Cuba coalition and groups from the US states of Arkansas and Colorado have expressed their support to the reintroduction in the Senate on Tuesday of a bill that would expand agricultural exports to the Caribbean island.

Senators Michael Bennet (D-CO) and John Boozman (R-AR) introduced the Agricultural Export Expansion Act, legislation that would make it easier for American farmers to sell their goods to Cuba by removing restrictions on private financing for U.S. agricultural exports to the island nation.

“These restrictions are arbitrary and serve no purpose other than hurting our farmers and the Cuban people,” said James Williams, President of Engage Cuba.

“As U.S. producers across sectors struggle with sluggish markets and Chinese tariffs, it’s time we move this bad policy out of the way of our farmers, who deserve to be able to compete on equal ground for market share in Cuba,” Williams added.

Despite the U.S. blockade, U.S. producers have been able to export to the island since 2000. However, remaining restrictions on financial transactions involving Cuba have barred U.S. producers from offering financing to Cuban buyers, severely stunting export potential.

"We've heard loud and clear that American farmers and ranchers want the opportunity to compete and sell their product around the world, including in the Cuban market. Despite our progress in the 2018 Farm Bill, existing trade restrictions with Cuba continue to put our farmers and ranchers at a disadvantage," Senator Bennet said.

The Senate Agricultural Export Expansion Act follows the introduction of its House companion bill the Cuba Agricultural Exports Act, in March by Congressman Rick Crawford (R-AR-1) and Congresswoman Cheri Bustos (D-IL-17).

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