Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 20, 2026

The Honorable Brooke Rollins
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Ambassador Jamieson Greer
United States Trade Representative
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20508

RE: Impact of global sulfur disruptions on American farmers and fertilizer producers

Dear Secretary Rollins and Ambassador Greer:

We write as members of the Select Committee on Strategic Competition with the Chinese Communist Party to urge action to protect American farmers and domestic fertilizer producers from a deepening supply chain crisis. The convergence of geopolitical disruptions, the People's Republic of China's (PRC's) strategic use of export controls, and PRC government intervention in global commodity markets have created a critical vulnerability in America's agricultural supply chain. This challenge is one that requires a strong interagency response before irreversible harm can be done to American producers, rural communities, and ultimately, American families.

Sulfur is an indispensable input for the manufacture of phosphate fertilizer, an essential tool for sustaining American crop yields.[1] Over the past year, a series of geopolitical shocks including Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz have severely restricted global sulfur supply.[2] The result has been an acute and artificial price spike. In December 2025, sulfur traded at approximately $450 per ton. Today, spot market prices have surged above $1,000 per ton.[3] The United States Gulf Coast, once a reliable but modest global supplier, has become the primary source of global sulfur supply by default.[4] Yet American manufacturers are being systematically outbid in their own backyard.

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[1] https://ers.usda.gov/sites/default/files/_laserfiche/publications/113324/ERR-354.pdf?v=42889
[2] https://www.woodmac.com/press-releases/middle-east-conflict-disrupts-major-metals-and-mining-markets-threatening-global-supply-and-prices/
[3] https://www.spglobal.com/energy/en/news-research/latest-news/agriculture/052926-high-sulfur-prices-squeeze-fertilizer-margins-spur-production-cutbacks
[4] https://www.spglobal.com/energy/en/news-research/latest-news/agriculture/031926-sulfur-nitrogen-markets-under-pressure-as-middle-east-war-persists-analysts

The crisis facing American fertilizer producers is not simply a function of market forces, it reflects a deliberate strategic posture by the PRC government. Chinese state-affiliated and state-linked companies are actively purchasing American-produced sulfur at elevated prices, outcompeting domestic manufacturers. Mosaic Company, a cornerstone of American phosphate fertilizer production, was recently outbid for a sulfur contract by CMOC, a PRC-linked metals and mining company operating in Brazil. American sulfur is leaving the country while American fertilizer plants are idled.

In early May 2026, the PRC enacted a ban on sulfuric acid exports. By purchasing American sulfur at premium prices, converting it into sulfuric acid domestically, and then restricting exports of that processed product, Beijing is effectively weaponizing a critical agricultural input. The move hoards upstream supply while locking downstream output behind export controls. It reflects a sophisticated strategy by the PRC government to acquire American raw materials, process them domestically, and then restrict re-export, achieving supply chain leverage over American agriculture while preserving its own food security and industrial base.

The consequences of inaction are no longer theoretical. For example, the Mosaic Company is currently in curtailment at two manufacturing facilities due to its inability to secure affordable sulfur.[5] These disruptions are having impacts on farmers as well. The U.S. Department of Agriculture expects the average cost of production for an acre of corn to rise to $917 in 2026, up from $890.[6] This will layer on top of the increased cost of diesel and equipment and cut into the already thin margins that American farmers operate on.[7]

The window for preventive action is closing rapidly. Once phosphate manufacturing capacity is idled, restarting it is a slow and costly process. We urge you both to consider measures to resecure American fertilizer production. We urge USDA and USTR to develop a comprehensive fertilizer supply chain security strategy that accounts for geopolitical risk, adversarial commodity manipulation, and the strategic importance of domestic agricultural inputs.

American farmers, workers, and families are depending on this Administration to ensure farmers can access the fertilizer they need, at prices they can afford. Meanwhile, the Chinese Communist Party has demonstrated a willingness to exploit global commodity disruptions to advance its strategic interests at the expense of American producers and consumers.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter and please advise on how you can help lessen the pain of the current supply chain crisis.

Sincerely,

[5] https://www.agri-pulse.com/articles/24654-mosaic-to-scale-back-us-phosphate-production-over-high-input-costs
[6] https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/commodity-costs-and-returns
[7] https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/rising-fuel-prices-hit-us-farms-iran-war-drags-2026-06-09/

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