

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2509

March 1, 2024

The Honorable Katherine Tai
U.S. Trade Representative
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington D.C. 20508

Dear Ambassador Tai,

The European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), set to go into effect this December, is a non-tariff trade barrier poised to devastate soybean farmers in my state. You are not doing your job to protect American producers, and the damage is being felt already: as stakeholders begin anticipatory compliance efforts, Missouri farmers are left to foot the bill for the EU's unfair practices. You must make this right by seeking appropriate revisions to the EUDR that will allow Missouri farmers to continue to access global markets, while managing their farms in accordance with best practices.

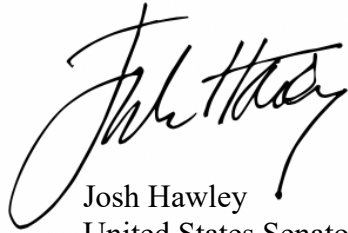
Last year, the European Parliament passed the EUDR, a law that would ban the import of products produced on land that has been "deforested" since December 31, 2020. To be clear, by any commonsense standard, Missouri farmers are not committing deforestation. Normal farm practices include clearing out fence lines, combining fields, farm road construction, clearing dead trees, and more. But the Regulation's definition of "deforestation" is incredibly expansive: "the conversion of forest to agricultural use, whether human-induced or not." As written, the European Union's stringent standard for deforestation would prevent farmers from completing necessary farm maintenance.

Absent immediate action by you, Missouri soybean farmers will face devastating consequences. Beginning on December 31, 2024, American farmers will no longer be able to sell their soybeans to the European Union without a verification proving their goods were not produced on deforested land, or risk substantial fines. This is fundamentally unfair: since the EUDR was passed in 2023, there is no way that American farmers could have adjusted their post-2020 practices to prepare in advance for this mandate. Countless farmers will now be disqualified from the European market through no fault of their own.

The harm of this trade barrier is not merely imminent. It is already happening. In order to maintain European market access, agribusiness company Archer Daniels Midland has announced plans to require four soybean facilities in the vicinity of northeastern Missouri to handle only verified, traceable soybeans products. This will impose additional costs on Missouri farmers unable to meet the EU's overbroad mandate, forcing uncertified farmers to travel far distances to sell their soybeans.

It is your responsibility to secure the removal of this non-tariff trade barrier and protect Missouri farmers from this abusive trade practice. The future of domestic soybean production—and thus American food security—hangs in the balance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Hawley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Josh Hawley
United States Senator