



Colorado Potatoes

February 1, 2010

RE: SB10-72 Potato Seed Act

Senate Agriculture Committee

Dear Senate Agriculture Committee,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the potato industry in the San Luis valley. I am the executive director of the Colorado Potato Administrative Committee, Area II and represent all potato growers within this region.

The industry began working on this legislation in 1997 as a collaborative effort between the commercial potato growers and seed potato growers. The industry has crafted this legislation over the last three years with widespread producer input, with the intention of accomplishing the objectives of the Potato Seed Act while minimizing the regulatory impact, and limiting the cost to producers and the state of Colorado. Growers in northern Colorado have also been consulted and support the legislation.

The Colorado Seed Potato Act would accomplish these objectives:

- Attempt to minimize the spread of easily spread diseases between growers by requiring growers to plant certified seed at least every other year, or test seed they want to plant for these viral diseases before planting to assure minimal disease levels. Less disease will result in higher quality crops and potentially less pesticide use. The Act also strengthens the current Late Blight quarantine for seed produced within Colorado.
- Allow Colorado growers to keep pace with the rest of the nation in exporting seed and commercial potatoes. Colorado is one of only two major potato producing states without any potato seed law. The major export market for Colorado commercial potatoes is Mexico. Mexico requires potato imports be planted from certified seed. Colorado potato growers need to strategically position themselves to take advantage of the potential growth of the Mexican export market.
- The Potato Seed Act will insure growers have the records they need to comply with trace forward-trace back provisions of current Homeland Security laws and pending food safety legislation. All potato growers in the San Luis valley will share the cost of reviewing these seed records by requiring CPAC, Area II to pay for it therefore minimizing the cost for the state of Colorado.
- Creates an industry representative advisory committee to advise the Commissioner of Agriculture concerning rules promulgation and enforcement of the Act.

Sincerely,

Jim Ehrlich
Executive Director, CPAC Area II