



Congresswoman Lois Capps

23rd District of California
www.house.gov/capps

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Contact: Rep. Capps: Emily Kryder
202-226-7747 office

Capps, Issa, Boxer, Introduce Legislation In The House And Senate To Ensure Hass Avocado Quality

*Legislation Would Protect Consumers And Facilitate Fair
Competition By Requiring That Imported Avocados Are Held To
Same High Quality Standards As Domestic Avocados*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today Congresswoman Lois Capps (D-CA) and Congressman Darrell Issa (R-CA) introduced the Hass Avocado Quality Assurance Act. Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) also introduced a companion bill today in the Senate. The legislation would protect consumer interests and facilitate fair competition by ensuring that imported Hass avocados meet the same fruit maturity requirement that is currently imposed on California-grown Hass avocados under state law.

The vast majority of all domestically produced Hass avocados for the U.S. commercial market are grown in the State of California. California avocados are inspected by the State Department of Food and Agriculture to ensure compliance with minimum maturity and size and weight requirements set forth in State regulation. Currently, this critical quality standard is not applicable to imported avocados. As a result, immature imported avocados are being sold to consumers in the United States.

The lack of a uniform maturity requirement for imported avocados negatively impacts demand for all Hass avocados because immature avocados are unpalatable, and consumers who purchase and consume immature avocados are more likely to cease buying all avocados. The Hass Avocado Quality Assurance Act seeks to address this inequity by mandating minimum maturity standards for all Hass avocado imports. Such legislation will make certain a consistently high quality supply of Hass avocados that will benefit California's avocado growers and consumers throughout the United States.

“I am pleased to be introducing this common sense legislation that will protect the interests of avocado consumers and growers,” said Rep. Capps. “This bill will ensure that consumers have access to the highest quality Hass avocados and it will also level the playing field by promoting fair competition among domestic and international Hass avocado growers. This is a win-win situation for avocado consumers and growers and I hope that this bill moves quickly through the legislative process.”

“I am proud that California produces the highest quality avocados in the world,” said Rep. Issa. “Consumers expect a high quality avocado when they see the name ‘Hass’ and Congress needs to ensure that immature and low-quality imports don’t harm this sought after variety.”

Senator Boxer said, “Imported avocados should be held to the same quality standards as those produced in California to ensure consistent quality. This bill promotes accountability for all avocado farmers at home and abroad, and American consumers will benefit as a result.”

The Hass Avocado Quality Assurance Act enjoys strong support from California avocado growers, including the California Avocado Commission.

"Avocado growers and consumers alike will benefit from Hass avocados that are consistently near ready-to-eat at the retail level. The bill introduced today by Rep. Lois Capps and her colleagues provides that assurance and we commend their leadership in advancing this important piece of legislation," said California Avocado Commission (CAC) President Mark Affleck. The CAC represents approximately 6,500 avocado growers in California.

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