

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 18, 2014

The Honorable John F. Kerry
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary,

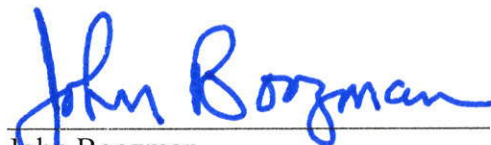
We write in reference to a recent decision by the Iraqi Grain Board (IGB) to decline a competitive bid from U.S. rice for an Iraqi rice tender. This latest action is of great concern and has dealt a significant blow to American rice farmers. We urge you to convey our deep concern with this decision to your Iraqi counterpart, and utilize the necessary resources to ensure the United States is afforded a level playing field when competing for Iraqi rice tenders.

According to several reports, the IGB issued an international grain tender to purchase 170,000 tons of rice in early November. Despite a competitive bid from U.S. rice priced at a considerably lower price point than foreign competitors, the bid was not accepted by the IGB. Results reported from the rice tender indicate that several winning bids were awarded to other countries with considerably higher price points than the U.S., most notably Brazil and Uruguay. Not only is this latest outcome inexplicable, it raises serious questions about the legitimacy and integrity of the Iraqi rice tender bidding process.

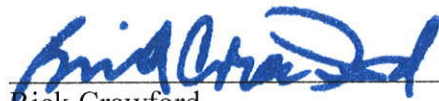
Given the considerable investment of resources by the American taxpayer in Iraq, it is critical that the United States be on "equal footing" with its foreign competitors when it comes to the ability to win bids issued by the IGB. Simply deciding to pick winners and losers in bids for Iraqi rice tenders based on arbitrary reasons is not only unfair, it deprives rice farmers in Arkansas, a leader in rice production, and across America of a vital trading partnership with Iraq. Our nation's rice farmers have the ability to accommodate Iraq's import needs in both price and quality, and unfairly excluding them from the opportunity to do so is unacceptable.

In closing, a new tender to purchase at least 30,000 tons of rice was issued by the IGB the week of November 10, 2014. This latest tender offer closed on Sunday, November 16, 2014, and winning bids are expected to be announced the week of November 17th. In light of the concerns we've raised regarding Iraqi rice tenders, we respectfully request your assistance in ensuring that our nation's rice farmers are afforded a fair opportunity to compete for business in Iraq. We appreciate your consideration of this important matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



John Boozman
U.S. Senator



Rick Crawford
Member of Congress