MONTANA STOCKGROWERS ASSOCIATION, INC.,
Helena, Mont., June 5, 1968.

Hon. WILBUR MILLS,
Chairman, House Ways and Means Committee,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Montana Stockgrowers Association is the established representative of Montana's beef cattle industry with a membership of more then 5300 cattle rancher members. On behalf of our membership we will appreciate your serious consideration of the proposal embodied in H.R. 9475 and similar bills which will tighten up some of the provisions of the law passed by Congress in 1964.

As is obvious from the many proposals before your committee, serious problems exist for our domestic producers. Since the beef cattle industry led the way with a new approach in securing recognition from the Congress with Public Law 88–482 in 1964, it is logical that the weaknesses in this Act which have become apparent through experience since then should be corrected at this time. H.R. 9475 and similar measures before you are designed to accomplish this. Loopholes which could not be foreseen in 1964 include the allowance of a ten percent override of imports before quotas are imposed; the necessity for quarterly quotas to take out some of the wide fluctuations of imports; eliminating the extraordinarily heavy import year of 1963 in the base quota, and coverage of only fresh, frozen or chilled meat.

There was no real pattern of modern imports with which to work so it was thought necessary to install some flexibility into the law. That some flexibility has proven to be too loose to keep foreign importers from gearing shipments to just miss the "trigger point" for quotas and still flood our markets at times.

If the economic drain on our economy caused by a balance of payment deficit which has been stressed before your committee is true, then it is indefensible to be importing beef into our country today. Our own domestic industry is necessarily restricting its production in order to tailor supply to active demand. At the same time we are forced to accommodate importations of beef equal to approximately 6% of our own production.

Correction of the weakeness of Public Law 88–482 at this time is in the national interest and will be reflected in the balance of payments. Recognition of the economic position of the beef cattle industry can provide a far-reaching stimulus to all concerned. We sincerely urge your committee recommend immediate action.

RALPH MIRACLE, *Secretary.*

NEBRASKA STOCK GROWERS ASSOCIATION,
Alliance, Nebr., May 25, 1968.

Re H.R. 9475, Meat Imports.

Hon. WILBUR D. MILLS,
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MILLS: During the past year, with our national economy riddled with inflation, those persons engaged in agriculture, and especially those producing beef cattle and feed grains, are operating today on margins that are intolerable.

The agricultural industry is the largest industry in the United States as regards number of people employed and total assets, and the American beef cattle producer comprises a most important segment of this vital industry. These people are responsible for the production of food and fiber enabling the United States to enjoy such a high level of health and high standard of living, as well as supporting our armed forces around the globe. They are also consumers of all types of goods and services on a vast scale and should not be expected to keep producing their products at a loss. With guidelines for wages and other costs now exceeding a 5 percent increase annually, in essence, the American cattleman and livestock feeder, today, is subsidizing all consumers with the highest quality and best accepted food product in the nation—beef.

It is a proven fact that meat imports are a major factor in depressing cattle prices as well as other segments of agriculture. In each period of improving cattle market prices during the time P.L. 88–482, the present meat import stat-