

**From:** MacLean, Alex  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 18, 2012 1:15 PM  
**To:** Ross, Chuck  
**CC:** Lofy, Bill; London, Sarah  
**Subject:** Re: Assistance needed re: Deep Root Coop and border issues

Looping in Sarah London. On the face of it seems like something he should weigh in on.

Sent from my iPad

On Feb 18, 2012, at 6:47 AM, "Ross, Chuck" <Chuck.Ross@state.vt.us> wrote:

> Heads up:  
> there is a federal issue with canadian farmers crossing into VT to participate in their Coop  
Deep Root. The issue is outlined below. It may make sense at some point for the Governor to  
weigh in.  
>  
> chuck  
>  
>  
> \_\_\_\_\_  
> From: Berry, Tom (Leahy) [Tom\_Berry@leahy.senate.gov]  
> Sent: Friday, February 17, 2012 4:53 PM  
> To: 'ellen@vsjf.org'; 'Patricia.Coates@mail.house.gov'; Nelson, Jenny (Sanders); Ross, Chuck;  
Zamos, Diane; Sussman, Susan (Leahy)  
> Cc: 'VADP@vsjf.org'  
> Subject: Re: Assistance needed re: Deep Root Coop and border issues  
>  
> Looping in our immigration expert, susan sussman.  
>  
> ----- Original Message -----  
> From: Ellen Kahler [mailto:ellen@vsjf.org]  
> Sent: Friday, February 17, 2012 03:07 PM  
> To: Patricia.Coates@mail.house.gov <Patricia.Coates@mail.house.gov>; Nelson, Jenny  
(Sanders); Berry, Tom (Leahy); Ross, Chuck <Chuck.Ross@state.vt.us>;  
dzamos@atg.state.vt.us <dzamos@atg.state.vt.us>  
> Cc: John Ryan <VADP@vsjf.org>  
> Subject: Assistance needed re: Deep Root Coop and border issues  
>  
> Hello,  
>  
> I asked our VT Ag Development staff person -- John Ryan -- to provide  
> the following information as background information. We would like to  
> request a conference call be established between all receiving this  
> email to discuss the growing challenges that Quebec farmers who are  
> owner/members of Deep Root Organic Co-op are experiencing while trying  
> to cross the US/Canadian border in Derby Line.

>

> FROM JOHN RYAN: "As you may know, the Vermont Ag Development Program

> has been providing technical assistance to the Deep Root Organic Co-op

> of Johnson VT, a co-op of 14 farmers, half of whom live in Vermont and

> half in southern Quebec. In the past year, the Canadian farmers

> associated with Deep Root -- several of whom have been in the co-op for

> over 20 years -- have been experiencing increasing problems at the

> border. One member was prevented from entering the country for the past

> year before Homeland Security made an apparently unprecedented decision

> and remanded that order in January. Since that reversal, other members

> coming to attend the co-op's board meetings have been detained at the

> Derby crossing, subjected to increasing levels of interrogation, and

> told that they cannot legally perform a number of their functions as

> board members of the co-op. At this point, some farm members feel that

> when they mention their affiliation with Deep Root Organic Co-op, it

> triggers a heightened level of response at that particular crossing

> station.

>

> This has resulted in members withdrawing from active participation in

> the co-op's activities in Johnson, VT, and makes the others on both

> sides of the border unsure of their status. This is particularly

> unfortunate now, as Deep Root Organic is actively considering an

> important commitment to participation in the Vermont Food Venture

> Center, but cannot move forward under this new cloud of uncertainty.

> Co-op members have asked me if, as part of my assistance under the

> Vermont Ag Development Program, I could explore the feasibility of

> approaching our congressional delegation and VT Agency of Ag legal

> counsel to see if we can provide the Deep Root farmers with a clear

> understanding of their rights and limitations in doing the co-op's

> business.

>

> Do you think it would be possible to arrange a conference call with the

> Agency of Agriculture's legal counsel, members of the VT Congressional

> delegation's staff, representatives of Deep Root's board, and possibly

> representatives from the Quebec Provincial government, to discuss how to

> move forward? Thank you for your help with this on behalf important

> partnership and critical asset in the state's local food system."

>

> I know Senator Sanders staff has helped on this front in the past and we

> deeply appreciate his assistance. However, the situation seems to have

> escalated to a level where we may need the full weight of the entire

> delegation to make something happen.

>

> Please let me know if you are amenable to meeting to gain greater

> clarity on what has been transpiring at the border and to assess what

> our options are with helping these farmers. We will then set up a doodle

> to determine the best time for a conference call amongst us.  
>  
> Ellen Kahler  
> Executive Director  
> Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund  
> 3 Pitkin Court, Suite 301east  
> Montpelier, VT 05602  
> 802-828-5320  
> ellen@vsjf.org  
> www.vsjf.org  
>  
> Check it out! <http://www.vtenergyatlas.com>  
> <<http://www.vtenergyatlas.com/>>