

E.O. 24-01: Foreign-Owned Agricultural Land – Press Conference

January 2, 2023

- Good afternoon and thank you for being here.
- I hope all of you had a Merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year.
- Today, we're here to talk about foreign-owned agriculture land in Missouri.
- With China and other adversarial nations on the move, concerns about the threats to our security interests have increased.
- Director Karsten, Director Chinn, and General Cumpton are here with me today as this order will directly impact their agencies.
- Lt. Governor Kehoe is also here, as being a farmer like myself, this issue has been important to him and his office.

[PAUSE]

- With no legislation approved the last couple of years and the coming political year, our administration wants to make sure we have something on the books to safeguard Missouri's security interests with the authority we do have.
- While we have had no issues yet, we want to be proactive against any potential threats.
- That's why today, we are signing Executive Order 24-01 to ban China, and other nations that may wish us harm, from owning Missouri agricultural land within 10 miles of any critical military facilities in the state.
- In addition to China, other nations banned include those designated as foreign adversaries by the U.S. State Department.

- Additionally, our order grants the Missouri Department of Agriculture greater oversight and enforcement authority over all foreign agriculture land purchases.
- With this order, now any foreign purchase of Missouri farm land must first be examined and approved by MDA.
- To help ensure that MDA has the necessary resources and staff to enforce these additional protections... We are including over \$200,000 dollars and two additional FTE in our upcoming budget recommendations to the General Assembly.

[PAUSE]

- I want to take a moment to reiterate what we are doing here today:
 - We are banning all purchases of Missouri agriculture land within 10 miles of critical military facilities by adversarial nations, including China.
 - AND we are empowering MDA to take a more active role in all potential foreign agriculture land purchases by entities from ANY foreign nation, including the approval or denial of all purchases.
- Understanding the heightened concern, this order safeguards our military and intelligence assets, prevents security threats to our state, and gives Missourians greater peace of mind.

[PAUSE]

- Now, I want to take a moment to address some potential questions as to why we didn't go further...as we know there are other ideas out there.

- First off, this is as far as our executive authority goes under the current law of our state.
 - Believe me, if I had the authority, we wouldn't just be talking about banning farm land but all commercial properties by foreign **adversaries**...regardless of rural or urban.
 - Because a commercial building in our urban areas in the hands of China poses just as much, if not more, of a threat to our security interests than a rural farm.

[PAUSE]

- Second, some of the other proposals being presented are clearly performative and would harm Missourians and our allies.
- Banning our adversaries...yes...
- BUT if we start banning every purchase of farm land by any foreign individual or business, then where does it end?
- Because I want to remind Missourians and especially legislators that foreign investment by friendly nations brings **billions of dollars and thousands of jobs** to our state.
 - In the last five years alone, nearly \$19 billion dollars has been invested in our state, and nearly 150,000 Missouri jobs are directly supported through foreign-owned Missouri businesses across our state.
 - Missouri has always had and always welcomed foreign investment from friendly nations.
- We are talking investments from our nation's allies...nations that do not pose a risk to our security.

- These are nations like...
- Israel, with 6 facilities in Missouri...
- Sweden, with over 20 facilities...
- Italy, with 22 facilities...
- Germany, with nearly 70 facilities,
- The United Kingdom, with 109 facilities,
- Canada, with 115 facilities,
- AND Japan, with 120...just to name a few.
- AND the Missouri workers in these facilities are producing trusted household goods like Hefty trash bags, Reynolds wrap, TUMs, Purex laundry soap, Dove soap, Kawasaki lawn mowers, pet and livestock medicines, and Fiocchi [fee·oh·chee] ammunition...to name just a few.
- These employers are from friendly nations that we have **strong, decades-long** economic partnerships with...and we must ensure that we are not disrupting Missouri's economy or Missourians' lives.
- These nations pose **no threat**...These nations are our allies.
- Common sense decisions and a balanced approach must always win.

CONCLUSION

- I also want to remind Missourians that the United States and Missouri stand as a beacon of hope, freedom, and opportunity for victims of oppression and communism around the globe.
- We want to protect the security of our state and safeguard against any threats to Missourians, but we don't want to stand in the way of good people, longing for a better life, from coming to Missouri legally and pursuing their own American Dream.

[PAUSE]

- As such, we believe this order today sufficiently protects Missouri's security interests from potential bad actors...
- While not punishing our allies for being good economic partners or upstanding individuals fleeing oppression in search of a better life.
- Thank you...and with that, I'll take any questions.