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The Honorable Jimmy Panetta of California

House of Representatives

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HONORING DRISCOLL'S

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Driscoll's, a company based in California's 20th Congressional District as the Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Cruz County's 2017 Food Donor of the Year. The company, made up of dedicated independent growers, has been donating their fresh berries to the Second Harvest Food Bank in Watsonville for over two decades. In 2016 alone, Driscoll's donated nearly one thousand tons of berries. Because of Driscoll's efforts, many food insecure families on the central coast of California now have access to the vitamin-rich and highly nutritious berries and can make them a part of a healthy diet.

The Driscoll and Reiter families, the founders of Driscoll's, have been producing berries in the Pajaro Valley since 1904. Officially founded in 1950 as Driscoll Strawberry Associates, Inc., the company originally sold only fresh California strawberries. Their creation of the first patented strawberry variety in 1958 made Driscoll's the national berry of choice by extending the crop's growing season and allowing berries to be shipped long distances. Today, they have expanded their operations from just strawberries to include raspberries, blueberries, and blackberries. Driscoll's innovative work, along with the contributions from many other farmers and ranchers of the Central Coast, has contributed to my district's reputation as an agricultural powerhouse.

Driscoll's has always been committed to giving back to the local communities that have given them so much. Through their Berry Donation Program, Driscoll's works to make sure families throughout their community have access to berries during local growing seasons. The company also supports a variety of food banks and related organizations such as the California Association of Food Banks and Ag Against Hunger. Driscoll's culture of philanthropy is not limited solely to their senior leadership, but extends to their employees who are closely involved in the company's efforts to support their communities. Together, Driscoll's and their employees have donated over 5 million pounds of berries to the Second Harvest Food Bank.

As the representative of the 20th Congressional District, I commend Driscoll's for working to ensure that families on the Central Coast have access to the fresh and nutritious berries grown in their own backyard. We are lucky that they call the 20th Congressional District home. Mr. Speaker, I ask that my colleagues in the House join me in congratulating Driscoll's on their 2017 Food Donor of the Year award.