



News Release

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National Potato Council Announces New Executive Team Kam Quarles is the new C.E.O. and Mike Wenkel is the C.O.O.

Washington, D.C. – Today, the National Potato Council (NPC) announced a new executive team. Kam Quarles, the current Vice President of Public Policy and Communications for the NPC, will become the new Chief Executive Officer of the organization. Mike Wenkel, the current Executive Director of the Michigan Potato Industry Commission, will step into the newly-created role of Chief Operations Officer.

“I’m extremely pleased to make this announcement of such a strong executive team. The NPC has delivered great value for our industry during its time in Washington, D.C. Kam and Mike share our goals of enhancing that value long into the future,” said Larry Alsum, President of Alsum Farms & Produce and the 2019 NPC President.

“It’s very exciting to take on this new role. I’ve spent nearly twenty years in D.C. advancing farmers’ interests, and half of that time working for NPC. This strong new team will relentlessly pursue federal and international policies that maximize the competitiveness of the potato industry,” said Kam Quarles.

“I am excited to join the staff of the National Potato Council and work to advance the industry on a national level by applying all that I have learned serving Michigan agriculture over the past twenty-four years,” stated Mike Wenkel.

Kam Quarles has served in his current role since December of 2016. Prior to joining the Council staff, he served as the lead agriculture lobbyist for the international law firm of McDermott Will & Emery for clients including the National Potato Council, the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association, Sunkist Growers, Chiquita Brands International, the California Avocado Commission and other specialty crop interests. He also previously served as vice president for the United Fresh Produce Association and vice president of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives.

Mike Wenkel joined the staff of the Michigan Potato Industry Commission (MPIC) in August 2012 as the Executive Director and oversees research, promotional and educational activities for the industry. Additionally, he manages legislative activities for the Potato Growers of Michigan, Inc. (PGMI); a non-profit consisting of potato producers across the state. Prior to joining MPIC and PGMI, he served as the Manager of the Membership and Field Services Department for the Michigan Farm Bureau for its 193,000 members.

The new executive team will join Hollee Alexander, Senior Director of Programs and Events, and Hillary Hutchins, Manager of Programs and Events, in rounding out the current staff of the National Potato Council.

John Keeling will be retiring in June after 17 years leading the National Potato Council.

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The National Potato Council is the advocate for the economic well-being of U.S. potato growers on federal legislative, regulatory, environmental and trade issues. NPC supports the U.S. potato industry by monitoring issues affecting the strength and viability of the potato industry, influencing regulators and legislators on issues crucial to the industry's long-term success, ensuring fair market access for potatoes and potato products, and bringing the unique issues and interests of diverse growing regions in the U.S. together on a national level.