

U.S. BUSINESS COALITION FOR TPP

July 23, 2013

Hon. Michael Froman
United States Trade Representative
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20508

Dear Ambassador Froman:

As members of the U.S. Business Coalition for TPP, we write in conjunction with the 18th round of Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade negotiations, which are currently underway in Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia.

As you are aware, the TPP negotiations have entered a critical phase. The Japanese are joining the negotiations during this round, and many of the relatively easier issues have been addressed – with a number of draft chapters having been “parked” pending the take-up of the remaining and more-sensitive issues.

It is that latter aspect of the negotiations that we wish to address. We firmly believe that the broader interests of the United States are best met through further trade liberalization – at home as well as abroad, including with respect to the few sectors of the U.S. economy, such as textiles and apparel, sugar, and footwear, that continue to receive relatively substantial protection from import competition compared to most other sectors.

From the beginning, we have advocated as an overarching priority for no exclusion of specific sectors or commodities from commitments in these negotiations and for the phasing out of all tariffs and other market-access barriers. Competition drives competitiveness, and further opening the U.S. economy with a minimum of government protections or preferences that distort the functions of the market will help our economy remain adaptable and more capable of withstanding the sometimes challenging market dynamics – for the long-term benefit of our economy, our workers, and our consumers.

Our trade agreements to date also have incorporated a broad set of rules and disciplines, and we expect that they will serve as the framework for further strengthening in the TPP in areas such as agriculture, intellectual property, investment, financial and other services, and competition from state-owned enterprises, among others.

Liberalizing protected sectors will benefit U.S. consumers through lower prices, lower consumer price inflation, and greater selection. At the same time, market access commitments by the United States will help to advance the priorities of U.S. businesses in establishing strong rules for international trade and more open markets in other TPP countries. Such compromise thus opens the path to a stronger, more commercially meaningful trade agreement for all of the parties to these negotiations.

We therefore urge that U.S. negotiators be directed to tackle the remaining sensitivities in these negotiations in a timely manner with ambition and purpose – addressing the priorities of our TPP

partners but also obtaining commitments to disciplines that advance U.S. competitiveness in the globalized economy of the 21st century.

Thank you for considering our views. We look forward to working with you to promote the expeditious conclusion of an ambitious, comprehensive, and commercially meaningful Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement.

Respectfully,

AdvaMed

American Apparel & Footwear Association

American Association of Exporters and Importers

American Forest & Paper Association

American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC)

American Meat Institute (AMI)

Business Roundtable

Coalition of New England Companies for Trade (CONNECT)

Coalition of Service Industries

Columbia River Customs Brokers and Forwarders Association

Corn Refiners Association

Council of the Americas

Custom Brokers & Forwarders Association of Northern California

Customs Brokers & International Freight Forwarders Association of Washington State

Emergency Committee for American Trade (ECAT)

Express Association of America (EAA)

Fashion Accessories Shippers Association (FASA)

The Financial Services Roundtable

Footwear Distributors & Retailers of America (FDRA)

Grocery Manufacturers Association

Idaho Potato Commission

International Dairy Foods Association

Los Angeles Customs & Freight Brokers Association

National Cattlemen's Beef Association

National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA)

National Foreign Trade Council

National Grain and Feed Association

National Oilseed Processors Association

National Pork Producers Council

National Potato Council

National Retail Federation

North American Export Grain Association

Pacific Coast Council of Customs Brokers and Freight Forwarders (PCC)

Pet Food Institute

Retail Industry Leaders Association

San Diego District Customs Brokers Association

Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association
Semiconductor Equipment and Materials International (SEMI)
SPI: The Plastics Industry Trade Association
Sweetener Users Association
Travel Goods Association (TGA)
United States Council for International Business
United States | New Zealand Council
U.S. Apple Association
US-ASEAN Business Council
U.S. Association of Importers of Textiles and Apparel (USA-ITA)
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
U.S. Grains Council