

Business Council for Sustainable Energy
Coalition of Service Industries
Emergency Committee for American Trade
Information Technology Industry Council
National Association of Manufacturers
National Foreign Trade Council
Organization for International Investment
Retail Industry Leaders Association
United States Chamber of Commerce

July 30, 2009

Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

We write to express our appreciation for your commitment to lower trade barriers to environmentally-friendly goods and services, which would result in important benefits for the U.S. economy and to global climate change efforts. We strongly urge you to pursue a swift conclusion of a comprehensive Environmental Goods and Services Agreement through all appropriate international economic and environmental forums.

Lowering trade barriers on green goods and services would be good for the environment and the U.S. economy. The World Bank notes that, "it is widely accepted that trade liberalization of [environmental goods and services] would benefit the environment by contributing to lowering the costs of goods and services necessary for environmental protection, including those beneficial for climate change." U.S. businesses and workers would also benefit from the removal of disproportionately high tariffs and non-tariff barriers that U.S. exporters face on green goods and services in a large and rapidly growing export market. Lowering trade barriers would help create the green jobs that will accelerate recovery of the U.S. economy.

We urge you to use all possible channels to pursue an agreement to reduce or eliminate trade barriers on environmental goods and services. While the Doha Development Round of trade negotiations under the World Trade Organization (WTO) is one appropriate forum, we believe the combined economic and environmental benefits of an agreement warrant the exploration of alternative or complementary efforts. We hope you will investigate the feasibility of either a plurilateral agreement at the WTO or the initiation of negotiations via another forum, balancing the need to capture a significant portion of environmental trade and an ability to enforce commitments with a framework that is flexible enough to permit the rapid conclusion of a deal. We believe that either the Forum on Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) or the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which have initiated important work on reducing barriers to green goods and services, could serve as the basis for interim commitments in advance of an agreement at the WTO.

We also encourage you to introduce the consideration of avoiding and eliminating barriers to green trade into international climate change discussions. While an environmental forum is not the appropriate venue for negotiating a trade agreement, international climate discussions – for example at the United Nations, in the Major Economies Forum and in bilateral and regional forums – should reflect the importance of lower trade barriers in delivering clean technologies to developing countries. As international climate change negotiators seek to agree upon a range of policies to help developing countries finance and adopt clean technologies, promoting the utility of lowering trade barriers on green goods and services should be a key component of a U.S. approach. This approach should also facilitate the deployment of technology while preserving in full the incentives for U.S. companies to invest in the development of new solutions. Promoting trade and protecting Intellectual Property rights in green technologies are of paramount importance if we are to enable the creation of new solutions to climate change and green jobs in the United States.

It is equally vital for domestic efforts to recognize the importance of lowering trade barriers. Thus far, congressional efforts to provide a framework for exporting clean technology, for example through the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009, have failed to include any mention of global trade in environmentally-friendly goods and services. Emphasizing the importance of an international environmental goods and services agreement in domestic legislation would enhance legislative efforts to deliver clean technologies to the developing world. **We hope that you and your Administration will work with Congress to generate clear signals of support for lower trade barriers, which can help to reinforce a positive message on lowering green tariffs to the international community.**

We look forward to working with you to amplify and support your efforts to achieve an Environmental Goods and Services Agreement in the coming months. Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

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