

U.S. BUSINESS COALITION FOR TPP

June 14, 2010

The Honorable Ron Kirk
United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20508

Dear Ambassador Kirk:

As the United States hosts the second round of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations this week, we are writing on behalf of the U.S. Business Coalition for TPP to express our strong support for the negotiation of a comprehensive, high-standard TPP agreement. We encourage you and the other TPP partners to seize this opportunity to simplify and expand trade and investment relations among all eight countries and reach a final agreement by the time that the United States hosts the 2011 APEC Summit.

The U.S. Business Coalition for TPP is a broad-based, cross-sectoral group of companies and business groups that represents the principal sectors of the U.S. economy, including agriculture, manufacturing, and services enterprises of all sizes throughout the country. To help sustain and generate economic activity and jobs in the United States, we believe it is vital for the TPP negotiations to achieve an agreement that expands the ability of all U.S. companies – no matter how big or how small – and their workers to compete in the rapidly growing Asia-Pacific region. Such an agreement, among other objectives, should eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade and investment, facilitate the movement of goods and services throughout the TPP countries, protect U.S. intellectual property and investment, and establish greater collaboration with our TPP negotiating partners and their private sectors.

While we recognize that these negotiations will be highly complex and challenging, we believe that the ultimate agreement should simplify and expand trade by eliminating the traditional and non-traditional trade and investment barriers in the Asia-Pacific that have hampered the ability of U.S. enterprises and their workers to compete on a level playing field in the region. The growing economies and rising middle class throughout the world present important new opportunities for American businesses and workers to support and create jobs and generate economic prosperity.

As President Obama noted in his State of the Union, we cannot afford to wait on the sidelines while our trade competitors negotiate trade and investment deals to their benefit that exclude or ignore U.S. interests. Time is of the essence. As the global economy works toward recovery and our economic competitors, including the EU, Canada, India and China, are negotiating new trade agreements quickly among themselves, the United States is falling behind because it is not moving forward. We are losing economic opportunities and being placed at a competitive disadvantage in major markets.

To respond to these developments, the United States and its TPP partners should set the ambitious goal of concluding the TPP negotiations by the APEC Leaders meeting in November 2011. Achieving this bold goal will demonstrate the United States' commitment to opening markets and investment opportunities throughout the Asia-Pacific region at the Leaders Meeting in Hawaii. Concluding the TPP negotiations on such a timeline will also support the President's goal of doubling exports in five years. With such an ambitious Presidential goal, there is no time to waste.

It is important, therefore, that significant progress be made during the second round of negotiations. To achieve a high-standard agreement, all sectors must remain on the negotiating table and all efforts should be made to build off of and expand the trade-liberalizing commitments from trade agreements already in force among the TPP negotiating partners.

We also urge the United States and its seven TPP negotiating partners to agree to a standstill for the duration of the negotiations. Under such a standstill, the TPP countries should agree not to adopt new trade or investment restrictions that would limit beyond existing levels the access of TPP countries to each other's commercial and procurement markets or reduce levels of transparency or protections for intellectual property or investment that affects goods and services of the TPP countries.

We have seen a number of different proposals already that would exclude some sectors from the negotiations, limit opportunities to improve upon pre-existing agreements, and impose exceptions to the strong rules and market-access provisions that are vital for a truly 21st-century agreement that addresses the commercial realities of trade in the international economy. Adopting any of these proposals will undermine the ability of the TPP to serve as a new model for trade expansion to support global economic recovery and will constrain any final agreement's ability to benefit our nation's farmers, industries, workers and consumers.

The U.S. Business Coalition for TPP strongly supports your efforts to make progress in the second round of TPP negotiations and looks forward to working with you, the USTR negotiating team, the U.S. Congress and all stakeholders to achieve a comprehensive, high-standard and commercially meaningful TPP agreement that will produce concrete benefits and jobs for America and American farmers, manufacturers, service providers and workers.

Respectfully,

AdvaMed
American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA)
American Automotive Policy Council (AAPC)
American Chamber of Commerce Australia
American Chamber of Commerce Hong Kong
American Chamber of Commerce New Zealand
American Chamber of Commerce Peru
American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai
American Chamber of Commerce Singapore
American Chamber of Commerce Vietnam – Hanoi
American Chemistry Council (ACC)

American Cleaning Institute
American Council of Life Insurers (ACLI)
American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC)
Ann Taylor
Applied Materials, Inc.
Association of Equipment Manufacturers (AEM)
AT&T
Avaya Inc.
Best Buy Co., Inc.
The Boeing Company
California Chamber of Commerce
Campbell Soup Company
Cange International, Inc.
Cargill, Incorporated
Caterpillar Inc.
Charming Shoppes, Inc.
Chevron
Citibank, N.A.
Coalition of New England Companies for Trade (CONNECT)
Coalition of Service Industries (CSI)
The Coca-Cola Company
Council of Insurance Agents and Brokers (CIAB)
Council of the Americas
Corn Refiners Association
CropLife America
Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS)
The Dow Chemical Company
El Camino College Center for International Trade Development
Emergency Committee for American Trade (ECAT)
Express Association of America (EAA)
Exxon Mobil Corporation
Fashion Accessories Shippers Association (FASA)
FedEx Express
Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold Inc.
Gap Inc.
General Electric (GE)
GlaxoSmithKline
Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA)
Hanesbrands
Hewlett-Packard Company
IBM Corporation
Information Technology Industry Council (ITI)
Intel Corporation
International Business-Government Counselors (IBC)
J.C. Penney Corporation, Inc.
Johnson & Johnson

Kraft Foods
Levi Strauss & Co.
Mars Incorporated
The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.
Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA)
National Association of Manufacturers (NAM)
National Center for APEC
National Confectioners Association (NCA)
National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC)
National Oilseed Processors Association (NOPA)
National Retail Federation (NRF)
News Corporation
NIKE Inc.
OceanWind International, Inc.
Oliva Global Communications
Oracle
Otis McAllister, Inc.
Perry Ellis International
Pet Food Institute (PFI)
Pfizer Inc.
Philip Morris International
Phillips-Van Heusen Corporation
Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA)
Ruiz Foods, Inc.
Society of Chemical Manufacturers and Affiliates (SOCMA)
Sweetener Users Association (SUA)
Symantec Corporation
Target Corporation
TechAmerica
Time Warner
Travel Goods Association (TGA)
TTI Global Resources
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
United Parcel Service (UPS)
United States Association of Importers of Textiles and Apparel (USA-ITA)
United States Council for International Business (USCIB)
United States – New Zealand Council
United Technologies Corporation
US-ASEAN Business Council
Vietnam Partners, LLC
W.J. Byrnes & Co.
Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.