

NATIONAL FOREIGN TRADE COUNCIL, INC.

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April 14, 2009

The Honorable Ron Kirk
United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Ambassador Kirk:

On behalf of the members of the National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC), I am writing in support of the United States negotiating membership in a U.S. – Trans-Pacific Partnership Free Trade Agreement (TPP) and to urge you to move forward on this negotiation. The NFTC's members are leading U.S. companies actively trading and investing around the world. For over ninety years, we have worked to promote an open rules based world trading system. Our mission is to assure that our member companies have the opportunity to pursue commercial engagement that creates economic opportunity both at home and in the foreign markets they enter.

As an organization comprised of companies representing a broad cross section of industries that drive the U.S. economy, the NFTC strongly supports deepening ties and expanding the scope of our economic and strategic relations with trading partners in the Asia-Pacific region, starting with the negotiation of a TPP with Singapore, Chile, New Zealand, Brunei Darussalam, Australia, Peru and Vietnam. The TPP is an ambitious effort to craft a high-standard plurilateral FTA. The successful completion of the WTO Doha Round is our highest priority, but we believe the TPP initiative will complement those efforts and foster progress towards global trade liberalization.

We support this focus on the Asia Pacific region on its commercial merits. This region is key to maintaining and increasing U.S. competitiveness in the world. We believe that building on an existing P-4 agreement among Chile, New Zealand, Singapore and Brunei and adding willing partners as the terms of the agreement are strengthened is wise and may serve as a model for future regional agreements. And, as we face a global economic crisis of historic proportion, we urge the Obama Administration to move forward with this major trade liberalizing initiative as a clear statement to those who would use the economic fear now circling the globe as an excuse to erect protectionist barriers that have the potential to further damage U.S. and global economic recovery.

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Starting with an existing agreement, with partners who have proven a willingness to negotiate to the highest standards is a sound strategy, although a calculated risk. The proof of success of the TPP process will be the ability to reach a critical mass under a high standard agreement that will also pull in larger economies in the region. However, the seven nations who have entered these negotiations with us share the vision of using the TPP as a potential building block toward a larger Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific, and it is in America's national interest to be an equal partner in that effort, rather than on the outside looking in.

Therefore we urge you to move ahead with this initiative and look forward to working with you to negotiate a high standard agreement that opens new markets to provide additional economic opportunity and jobs to America's businesses, workers, farmers and ranchers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. A. Reinsch', written in a cursive style.

William A. Reinsch
President

cc: Tim Reif
Peter Cowhey