



February 23, 2017

The Honorable Orrin G. Hatch
Chairman
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Hatch,

I am writing to express the support of the National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC) for the expeditious confirmation of Robert Lighthizer for the position of United States Trade Representative (USTR). We urge the Committee to act quickly on this important nomination in order to ensure the smooth functioning of U.S. trade policy and the fulfillment of Congressionally mandated objectives in the trade arena.

NFTC is a leading organization of over 250 U.S. companies, including most of the nation's largest exporters. We have long been an advocate of U.S. leadership in opening global markets and ensuring a strong, enforceable system of global rules on trade and investment.

We are convinced that USTR plays an indispensable role in meeting both of those objectives. It plays a pivotal role within the U.S. Government to establish trade policy priorities and ensure their fulfillment through multilateral, regional and bilateral negotiations. It is also the vital link between Congress and the President in enabling both branches to work together in fulfilling their respective Constitutional roles to regulate international trade and negotiate trade agreements. The centrality of USTR is deeply engrained in the whole legislative framework for U.S. trade policy. Without a strong leader at USTR, one who is able to attract a good team of Deputies and gain the respect of Cabinet peers, Congressional leaders and foreign governments, American leadership in world trade and the institutions related thereto will begin to erode.

We recognize that your Committee must have an opportunity to fully examine the qualifications and record of any nominee for this important position. However, we urge you to move as expeditiously as possible on Ambassador Lighthizer's nomination. He has a long record as an expert on trade matters, having served both as Deputy USTR and as trade law practitioner. His prior service as Staff Director of the Senate Finance Committee gave him an acute awareness of the absolutely essential role USTR plays in coordinating trade policy with the key Congressional committees. This will help to ensure respect for the mandates set forth under TPA and other legislative measures governing trade policy.

We are convinced that Ambassador Lighthizer has the qualifications and experience to be a highly successful USTR. We sincerely hope the Committee can approve his nomination as soon as possible.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rufus Yerxa", is positioned above the typed name.

Rufus Yerxa
President