

AMERICANS FOR FREE ★ TRADE

November 16, 2021

The Honorable Katherine Tai
United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Ambassador Tai:

On behalf of the [Americans for Free Trade](#) coalition, we would like to commend you for your leadership and stakeholder engagement at USTR. After years of unpredictability and a devastating economic crisis caused by the global pandemic, global trade stakeholders welcome a new day and vision. As USTR develops the Biden-Harris Administration's worker-centered trade policy, it has a rare opportunity to tell the positive story about how trade benefits American consumers and workers. We strongly believe this is the time to focus on a trade policy that benefits all stakeholders. Such a trade policy should cover imports, exports, and foreign investment, all of which play important roles in our economy and society.

By way of background, Americans for Free Trade represents every part of the U.S. economy including manufacturers, farmers and agribusinesses, retailers, technology companies, service suppliers, natural gas and oil companies, importers, exporters, and other supply chain stakeholders. Collectively, we employ tens of millions of Americans through our vast supply chains.

As we respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic dislocation, USTR will play a vital role in helping American stakeholders understand how trade raises standards of living, creates job opportunities, enables extensive choices of affordable, high-quality products and services, and creates market opportunities abroad. Trade is essential to all Americans and sectors of the economy; American manufacturers are also importers; American consumers are workers; American farmers are exporters. These segments of the economy all work together to create jobs, innovate, and support our communities across the country.

After years of growing inequality and stagnating wages, we support a trade policy that, as you noted, advances the interests of all Americans who "...benefit from having good jobs, with good wages..." An effective post-pandemic trade policy will help American workers stretch their hard-earned wages when they put on their consumer hats and help American manufacturers gain access to affordable inputs to support their global competitiveness and offer high quality, affordable products that American consumers demand. It will also provide U.S. manufacturers, farmers, ranchers and service providers access to new growth markets around the world, which will create jobs, grow wages, and raise skill and education levels at home.

But too often there is a narrative that imports are relied upon to offer "cheap goods" at the expense of the American worker. Such a view fails to consider the full benefits of imports to

the U.S. economy. Imports not only provide American consumers – who are also American workers and families – a greater variety of products at affordable prices, but also help offset inflationary pressures, provide more than half of U.S. manufacturers’ intermediate inputs and components, and enrich our economy with employment in manufacturing, design, engineering, research, logistics, services and more. As noted in the May 2021 [“Imports Work for American Workers”](#) report, more than 21 million American jobs rely on imports. These important American jobs, and their value to the U.S. economy, must be considered as part of a holistic worker-centered trade policy.

Today’s economy relies upon interconnected global supply chains, often keeping high-paying, high-skilled jobs in the United States while working with overseas partners for final assembly. These imports reflect a globalized world in which specialized economies and workforces do what they do best, collaborating on products sold around the world. These supply chains are complex and should continue to play to America’s strengths. We encourage the Administration to embrace and support trade policies that both allow U.S. companies to remain globally competitive and open new markets and attract more foreign investment in the United States, in turn creating more American jobs.

As USTR balances stakeholder interests and forges a new path for trade policy, we urge it to publicly embrace the important role that imports, exports, and foreign investment play in creating a strong U.S. economy and how they work together to create benefits for American consumers, manufacturers, retailers, service providers, and, most importantly, American workers. Imports and exports are not in competition with each other but rather support each other and the U.S. industries who rely on them. And foreign investment continues to create jobs, revitalize communities, and expand access to overseas markets for U.S. goods and services.

We all agree that Americans are both “workers and wage-earners” and “consumers”. Underscoring the dignity of work and a decent wage is natural and aligns with our identity as Americans. A trade policy that claims to advance the interests and needs of all Americans should seek to meet them everywhere they work, live, succeed, struggle, and hope in today’s pandemic world. Their future and dignity depend on it.

We look forward to working with USTR and the Biden-Harris Administration on the development of a true worker-centered trade policy that embraces the importance of imports, exports, and foreign investment to both American workers and consumers, as well as to the U.S. economy and our global competitiveness.

Sincerely,

Accessories Council
ACT | The App Association
Agriculture Transportation Coalition (AgTC)
ALMA, International (Association of
Loudspeaker Manufacturing and Acoustics)
American Apparel & Footwear Association
(AAFA)

American Association of Exporters and Importers (AAEI)
American Association of Port Authorities
American Bakers Association
American Bridal & Prom Industry Association (ABPIA)
American Chemistry Council
American Coatings Association, Inc. (ACA)
American Down and Feather Council

American Fly Fishing Trade Association
 American Home Furnishings Alliance
 American Lighting Association
 American Petroleum Institute
 American Pyrotechnics Association
 American Rental Association
 American Seed Trade Association
 American Specialty Toy Retailing Association
 American Wind Energy Association
 Arizona Technology Council
 Arkansas Grocers and Retail Merchants
 Association
 Association For Creative Industries
 Association for PRINT Technologies
 Association of American Publishers
 Association of Equipment Manufacturers
 (AEM)
 Auto Care Association
 Beer Institute
 Business Alliance for Customs Modernization
 California Retailers Association
 Carolina Loggers Association
 Chemical Industry Council of Delaware
 (CICD)
 Coalition of New England Companies for
 Trade (CONNECT)
 Coalition of Services Industries (CSI)
 Colorado Retail Council
 Columbia River Customs Brokers and
 Forwarders Assn.
 Computer & Communications Industry
 Association (CCIA)
 Computing Technology Industry Association
 (CompTIA)
 Consumer Brands Association
 Consumer Technology Association
 Council of Fashion Designers of America
 (CFDA)
 CropLife America
 Customs Brokers & Freight Forwarders Assn.
 of Washington State
 Customs Brokers & Freight Forwarders of
 Northern California
 Distilled Spirits Council of the United States
 Electronic Transactions Association
 Energy Workforce & Technology Council
 Experiential Designers and Producers
 Association
 Fashion Accessories Shippers Association (FASA)
 Fashion Jewelry & Accessories Trade Association
 Flexible Packaging Association
 Florida Ports Council
 Florida Retail Federation
 Footwear Distributors and Retailers of America (FDRA)
 Fragrance Creators Association
 Game Manufacturers Association
 Gemini Shippers Association
 Georgia Retailers
 Global Chamber®
 Global Cold Chain Alliance
 Greeting Card Association
 Halloween Industry Association
 Home Fashion Products Association
 Home Furnishings Association
 Household and Commercial Products Association
 Idaho Retailers Association
 Illinois Retail Merchants Association
 Independent Office Products & Furniture Dealers
 Association (IOPFDA)
 Indiana Retail Council
 Information Technology Industry Council (ITI)
 International Association of Amusement Parks
 and Attractions (IAAPA)
 International Bottled Water Association (IBWA)
 International Foodservice Distributors Association
 International Housewares Association
 International Warehouse and Logistics Association
 International Wood Products Association
 ISSA - The Worldwide Cleaning Industry Association
 Jeweler's Vigilance Committee
 Juice Products Association (JPA)
 Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association
 Leather and Hide Council of America
 Licensing Industry Merchandisers' Association
 Los Angeles Customs Brokers and Freight
 Forwarders Assn.
 Louisiana Retailers Association
 Maine Grocers & Food Producers Association
 Maine Lobster Dealers' Association
 Maritime Exchange for the Delaware River and Bay
 Maryland Retailers Association
 Meat Import Council of America
 Methanol Institute
 Michigan Chemistry Council
 Michigan Retailers Association
 Minnesota Retailers Association

Missouri Retailers Association
 Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association
 Motorcycle Industry Council
 NAPIM (National Association of Printing Ink Manufacturers)
 National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS)
 National Association of Chemical Distributors (NACD)
 National Association of Foreign-Trade Zones (NAFTZ)
 National Association of Home Builders
 National Association of Music Merchants
 National Association of Printing Ink Manufacturers
 National Association of Trailer Manufacturers (NATM)
 National Confectioners Association
 National Council of Chain Restaurants
 National Customs Brokers and Freight Forwarders Association of America
 National Fisheries Institute
 National Foreign Trade Council
 National Grocers Association
 National Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association
 National Marine Manufacturers Association
 National Restaurant Association
 National Retail Federation
 National Ski & Snowboard Retailers Association
 National Sporting Goods Association
 Natural Products Association
 New Jersey Retail Merchants Association
 North American Association of Uniform Manufacturers and Distributors (NAUMD)
 North Carolina Retail Merchants Association
 Ohio Council of Retail Merchants
 Outdoor Industry Association
 Pacific Coast Council of Customs Brokers and Freight Forwarders Assns. Inc.
 Pennsylvania Retailers' Association
 PeopleforBikes
 Personal Care Products Council
 Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council
 Plumbing Manufacturers International
 Power Tool Institute (PTI)
 Promotional Products Association International
 Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association
 Retail Association of Maine
 Retail Council of New York State
 Retail Industry Leaders Association
 Retailers Association of Massachusetts
 RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment)
 RV Industry Association
 San Diego Customs Brokers and Forwarders Assn.
 SEMI
 Semiconductor Industry Association (SIA)
 Snowsports Industries America
 Society of Chemical Manufacturers & Affiliates
 Software & Information Industry Association (SIIA)
 South Dakota Retailers Association
 Specialty Equipment Market Association
 Specialty Vehicle Institute of America
 Sports & Fitness Industry Association
 TechNet
 Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA)
 Texas Retailers Association
 Texas Water Infrastructure Network
 The Airforwarders Association
 The Fertilizer Institute
 The Hardwood Federation
 The Toy Association
 The Vinyl Institute
 Travel Goods Association
 Truck & Engine Manufacturers Association (EMA)
 United States Council for International Business
 United States Fashion Industry Association
 US Global Value Chain Coalition
 US-China Business Council
 Virginia Retail Merchants Association
 Virginia-DC District Export Council (VA-DC DEC)
 Washington Retail Association
 Window and Door Manufacturers Association
 World Pet Association, Inc. (WPA)