

August 22, 2013

VIA FACSIMILE at 202.395.4549

The Honorable Michael Froman
United States Trade Representative
600 17th St. NW
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Ambassador Froman:

As leading New England-based footwear companies, we are writing to express strong support for a Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which if crafted correctly, will spur competition, create American jobs and enable consumers to buy shoes at a more affordable price.

Collectively, we employ 2,819 hard working Americans in Massachusetts, Maine and New Hampshire. These are jobs that rely on our industry's ability to design, distribute, market and sell footwear to American consumers and consumers all over the world. Our employees, along with the hundreds of thousands of more in our industry across this country, have made the United States the world leader in developing, marketing and selling footwear.

Ours is the face of the 21st century footwear industry, and we urge you to ensure that the footwear provisions in the TPP agreement truly represent a 21st trade agreement.

As you know, shoe tariffs were established as part of the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act of 1930 to protect a domestic manufacturing industry that has been in steady decline since the 1980s. Today over 99 percent of all shoes sold in this country are made outside the United States. Excessively high duties have failed to keep manufacturing jobs here, but they have succeeded in making shoes artificially expensive, hampering our ability to expand domestic employment throughout the footwear supply chain.

TPP is also important to American consumers, who will benefit from more affordable shoes if duties are eliminated on footwear. Americans pay the price for outdated tariffs. Indeed, while the average duty on consumer goods is only 1.3 percent, footwear duties are exorbitant, reaching nearly 70 percent on some items. Americans pay an estimated \$700 million in shoe taxes from TPP countries alone.

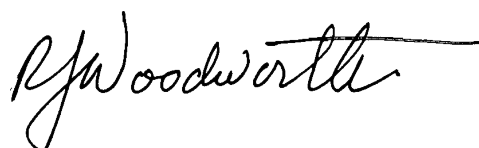
A strong TPP will benefit American workers and families by immediately eliminating tariffs on all footwear and ensuring flexible rules of origin. These provisions will drive competitiveness and ensure that the U.S. remains the best place in the world to innovate and design footwear.

We invite you to visit any of our companies and meet the men and women of the 21st Century footwear industry, and we urge you to consider their future when negotiating the TPP.

Sincerely,



Jim Calhoun
President & CEO
Converse Inc.



Richie Woodworth
President
Saucony Inc.



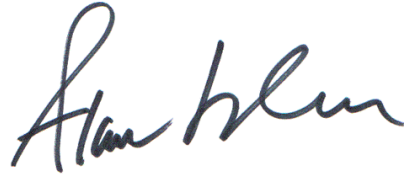
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