March 19, 2018

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As leading American footwear companies and brands, with hundreds of thousands of employees across the U.S., we write to express our strong concerns over reports that the Administration may consider tariff increases on footwear as a potential Section 301 remedy.

We support efforts to strengthen intellectual property protections around the world, and this has been one of the top priorities of our industry for many years. However, we reject the idea that the solution to this important issue is new hidden taxes on every American who buys and sells shoes.

U.S. footwear imports already face astronomically high tariff rates that fall disproportionately on working class individuals and families. While U.S. tariffs on all consumer goods average just 1.3 percent, they average 11 percent for footwear and reach rates as high as 67.5 percent. In 2017 alone, U.S. footwear companies and U.S. consumers paid nearly $3 billion in these hidden taxes. This amounts to billions upon billions of dollars paid since these tariffs were first enacted in the 1930s. U.S. footwear tariffs stifle innovation and job creation and raise the cost of shoes for every American.

Adding even more tariffs on top of this heavy burden would mean higher costs for footwear consumers and fewer U.S. jobs. Given the price sensitivity of our products, any additional increases in our costs would strike right at the heart of our ability to keep product competitively priced for our consumers.

In addition, footwear is a very capital-intensive industry, with years of planning required to make sourcing decisions, and companies cannot simply move factories to adjust to these changes. Any action taken to increase duties on Chinese footwear will have an immediate and long-lasting effect on American individuals and families.

Our companies design and develop the most innovative and sought-after footwear in the world and often face challenges in protecting their designs, patents, and trade dress. We want to work with the Administration to address these challenges and ensure adequate protections for the integrity of our brands. However, increasing tariffs on U.S. companies and consumers penalizes those that are seeking relief.
On behalf of our hundreds of millions of consumers, thank you for your consideration of our views. We ask that you keep American families and workers in mind as you contemplate increasing the tax on footwear sold in the United States.

Sincerely,

Aerosoles
Allen Edmonds
Bates
BBC International
Bionica Footwear
BOGS
Børn Handcrafted Footwear
Brooklyn Boot Company
Bzees
Caleres
Cat Footwear
Chaco
Chippewa Boots
Clarks
Columbia Sportswear
Converse
Cove Shoe Company
Crocs
Dearfoams
Deer Stags
Dexter Bowling Footwear
Dolce Vita
Double H Boots
Dr. Scholls Shoes
Famous Footwear
Feiyue Footwear
Florsheim

FN Platform/UBM
Foot Petals
Franco Sarto
Genesco
George Brown Bilt
H.H. Brown Shoe Co.
Harley Davidson Footwear
Hush Puppies
HyTest
Isolá Footwear
J. Reneé
Jane and the Shoe
Johnston & Murphy
Journeys
Justin Boots
Keds
Kork-Ease
Korks Footwear
LifeStride
Merrell
Montana Footwear
Naturalizer
NIKE
Nocona Boots
Nunn Bush
Off Broadway Shoe Warehouse
ONO

Payless ShoeSource
R.G. Barry Brands
Rack Room Shoes
Robert Wayne Footwear
Ryka
Sam Edelman
Saucony
Schwartz & Benjamin
SG Companies
Shoe Carnival
Snowden Brothers
Söfft Shoe Company
Sorel
Sperry
Stride Rite
Tony Lama Boots
Topline Footwear
Umi
Under Armour
Via Spiga
Vionic Group
Walk-Over Footwear
Weyco Group
Wolverine Worldwide

CC: The Honorable Robert Lighthizer, United States Trade Representative
The Honorable Wilbur Ross, Secretary of Commerce
The Honorable Larry Kudlow, Director, National Economic Council