

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 18, 2013

The Honorable Michael Froman
United States Trade Representative
Executive Office of the President
600 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20506

Dear Ambassador Froman,

Leaders of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) countries recently called for negotiators and ministers to conclude the TPP negotiations this year. Like many trade negotiations at this stage, the outstanding issues are among the most difficult but will determine whether TPP realizes its potential as a 21st century agreement that not only opens markets for U.S. agriculture, manufacturing, and service industries but also protects intellectual property.

In order to secure these commitments from our TPP partners, the United States must be willing to discuss its own impediments to market access. Since the 1930s, the United States has maintained extraordinarily high tariffs on footwear, which average 10 percent but range as high as 66 percent. These tariffs are costly to U.S. consumers and businesses (\$2.3 billion in 2012), the burden of which falls most heavily on lower income Americans. Moreover, these tariffs do not protect any significant U.S. manufacturing activity, as 99 percent of all the shoes sold in the United States are imported.

The immediate elimination of footwear tariffs in TPP, therefore, provides an opportunity to bargain for commitments that will benefit U.S. exporters and save money for U.S. companies and consumers, without negatively affecting U.S. manufacturing. The elimination of footwear tariffs in the context of an ambitious TPP agreement will directly benefit the U.S. footwear industry, which invests billions of dollars and employs hundreds of thousands of people in the United States, both through duty savings as well as new market access in TPP countries.

We therefore urge you to negotiate an elimination of these trade restrictive tariffs into the TPP agreement. The smart, balanced and reciprocal reduction and elimination of tariffs, including tariffs on footwear, will help spur innovation and economic growth. We appreciate your consideration of our views and look forward to receiving your reply.

Sincerely,


Michael B. Eiji


Paul Udall

Dan Vitter

May of Gardiner

Ken Wyden

John Barrasso

Frank Lautenberg

Mark

Robert Wyden

Tom Udall

Mike Johanns

Patty Murray

John Stine

Jerry Moran