

December 5, 2019

The Honorable Thom Tillis
Chairman
Subcommittee on Intellectual Property
Senate Judiciary Committee
United States Senate
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chris Coons
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Intellectual Property
Senate Judiciary Committee
United States Senate
218 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Tillis and Ranking Member Coons:

Thank you for introducing the Counterfeit Goods Seizure Act of 2019, which would give U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) additional tools to combat the surge of counterfeit footwear crossing our borders.

During the April 30th subcommittee hearing on the role of intellectual property (IP) in sports and public safety, I highlighted a significant and growing challenge for our industry. Bad actors are now shipping labels and trademark tags separately from counterfeit shoes and attaching them in the U.S. to avoid seizure. CBP currently lacks the authority to seize a shoe that is clearly a copy of a trademark shoe but does not have a logo or distinguishing tag. Because of this loophole, a large amount of counterfeit footwear can easily enter the U.S. and threaten our companies, our workers, and the communities they support. We appreciate you taking action to address this important issue.

As an industry, we are facing unprecedented challenges in protecting our IP, especially with the rise of e-commerce and the sophistication of today's counterfeit operations. Shoe companies spend hundreds of millions of dollars each year investing in innovation to make the next great pair of shoes. That is why we are able to supply nearly 2.5 billion pairs of shoes each year for U.S. consumers, a product Americans need and love.

Counterfeit products are costing U.S. companies and consumers millions each year. Moreover, we are concerned that the quality of these counterfeits could end up hurting U.S. consumers that wear them, and it is often nearly impossible to spot a fake pair of shoes.

That is why we write this letter of support for your legislation to strengthen CBP enforcement. It is a large step in the right direction and will help better address the rise of counterfeit shoes entering the U.S. We stand ready to work with you on this critical issue.

Sincerely,



Matt Priest
President & CEO
Footwear Distributors and Retailers of America