

February 22, 2024

The Honorable Jason Smith  
Chairman  
Committee on Ways and Means  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richard Neal  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Ways and Means  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Neal:

As footwear brands, material suppliers, and U.S. farmers, we write to express our support for policies that will drive investment in bio-based footwear materials.

Sustainable materials positively impact communities and the environment. Consumers are increasingly interested in footwear made from plants and other agricultural, forestry, and marine products. U.S. producers are also world leaders in developing cutting-edge biomaterials.

Footwear companies, however, face significant obstacles when investing in new materials, because footwear has the highest tariff burden of almost any consumer product. Footwear tariff rates average 12 percent, compared to just 1.9 percent for all other imported goods.

We believe the U.S. Tariff Code should be changed to incentivize the use of biomaterials in footwear. This would accelerate efforts to increase sustainability. It would also create new markets for American farmers that supply corn, beans, soy, and other plants that can be used as footwear components. It would mean more innovative shoes with less of an impact on our communities.

As the Committee develops its agenda for 2024, we encourage you to make bio-based footwear a top priority.

Sincerely,

**Brands and Suppliers**

**adidas America, Inc.**, Portland, OR  
**Algenis Materials**, San Diego, CA  
**Allbirds, Inc.**, San Francisco, CA  
**BBC International**, Boca Raton, FL  
**Brooks Running**, Seattle, WA  
**Caleres**, St. Louis, MO  
**Capri Holdings Limited**, New York, NY  
**Chaco**, Rockford, MI  
**Columbia Sportswear Company**, Portland, OR  
**Crocs, Inc.**, Broomfield, CO  
**Dansko LLC**, West Grove, PA  
**Deckers Brands**, Goleta, CA

**Deer Stags Concepts**, New York, NY  
**Designer Brands, Inc.**, Columbus, OH  
**Dynamic Foam**, Steamboat Springs, CO  
**Faryl Robin**, New York, NY  
**Fila USA**, Sparks, MD  
**Galaxy Universal, LLC**, New York, NY  
**Genesco Inc.**, Nashville, TN  
**GrndUp LLC d.b.a Solum**, Denver, CO  
**INSITE Performance, LLC**, Portsmouth, NH  
**jbrds**, Baltimore, MD  
**Jones and Vining, Inc.**, Brockton, MA  
**KEEN, Inc.**, Portland, OR  
**KURU Footwear**, Salt Lake City, UT  
**LOWA Boots**, Stamford, CT  
**Merrell**, Rockford, MI  
**Mississippi TanTec Leather, Inc.**, Vicksburg, MS  
**NFW**, Peoria, IL  
**NIKE, Inc.**, Beaverton, OR  
**OrthoLite Cirql**, Amherst, MA  
**Puma North America**, Somerville, MA  
**Reebok International Ltd., LLC**, Boston, MA  
**RG Barry Brands**, Pickerington, OH  
**Saucony**, Grand Rapids, MI  
**SG Companies**, Hackensack, NJ  
**Steven Madden, Ltd.**, Long Island City, NY  
**VF Corporation**, Denver, CO  
**Weyco Group**, Glendale, WI

### **Farmers**

**Advanced Ag Products**, McGehee, AR  
**Dan Blackburn**, Higginsville, MO  
**Dale Blessing**, Felton, DE  
**Mike Busing, Windy Ridge Ag**, Oakville, IA  
**Greg Dell**, Westminster, MD  
**Skyler de Regt**, Hollandale, MS  
**Benjamin Ellis Jr.**, Champlain, VA  
**Alexander Evans**, Centreville, MD  
**Mike Evans, Integrated Ag Solutions**, Dow City, IA  
**Brian Findley**, Gentry, MO  
**Jeff Fritz**, Westminster, MD  
**Kelly Garrett**, Arion, IA  
**Conner Garrett**, Arion, IA  
**Gene Garrett**, Arion, IA  
**Cathy Garrett**, Arion, IA  
**Cael Garrett**, Arion, IA  
**Amber Garrett**, Arion, IA

**Chad Henderson**, Madison, AL  
**Jackson Henderson**, Madison, AL  
**Marie Henderson**, Madison, AL  
**Mike Henderson**, Madison, AL  
**Connie Henderson**, Madison, AL  
**James Hepp**, Rockwell City, IA  
**Lisa Homer, FMC**, Philadelphia, PA  
**Integrated Ag Solutions**, Dow City, IA  
**Robert George Karcher**, Somerville, TN  
**Ang Male**, XtremeAg  
**Shelli Male**, XtremeAg  
**Damian Mason**, Huntington, IN  
**Lori Mason**, Huntington, IN  
**Kevin Matthews**, East Bend, NC  
**Cindy Matthews**, East Bend, NC  
**Timothy Matthews**, East Bend, NC  
**Matt Miles**, McGehee, AR  
**Layne Miles**, McGehee, AR  
**Sherrie Miles**, McGehee, AR  
**Rayne Miles**, McGehee, AR  
**Mariah Murphy, Windy Ridge Ag**, Missouri Valley, IA  
**Jon Nelson**, Lake Preston, SD  
**Josh Nelson**, Belmond, IA  
**Will Ostedt**, XtremeAg  
**Aaron Penix**, Belle Center, OH  
**Scott Poffenberger**, Sharpsburg, MD  
**Jim Raymond**, East Bend, NC  
**Jonathan Reynolds**, Clinton, KY  
**Temple Rhodes**, Centreville, MD  
**Caroline Rhodes**, Centreville, MD  
**Madeline Rhodes**, Centreville, MD  
**Darren Smith**, Clarkton, MO  
**Darren Smith**, Jay, FL  
**Nicholas Strom**, Groton, SD  
**Matthew Swanson**, Macomb, IL  
**Russell C. Uselton**, Shelbyville, TN  
**Danielle Matthews Venable**, East Bend, NC  
**Garrett Venable**, East Bend, NC  
**Johnny Verell**, Jackson, TN  
**Keith Werner**, Hanna, IN  
**Mike Wingrove, Integrated Ag Solutions**, Dow City, IA  
**XtremeAg LLC**, Gregory, SD