

Business Roundtable
Emergency Committee for American Trade
National Association of Manufacturers
National Foreign Trade Council
United States Council for International Business
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

August 5, 2009

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of our members and the business organizations we head, we urge you to use the occasion of your upcoming speech on the role of international trade to make the case that international economic engagement and strong efforts to eliminate market barriers overseas and at home are more important than ever to the revitalization of America's economy and new opportunities for American workers and industries.

At this time, your leadership is essential to start a new dialogue with the American people on how a revitalized bipartisan trade policy, along with domestic-competitiveness initiatives, can promote America's success and get our economy moving forward again. While we can all cite statistics about how the United States' exports, imports and investment bolster economic activity here at home, the challenge is to make those facts real for the many Americans who are fearful about losing their jobs and concerned that America can no longer compete successfully in the international economy. Another important element of that dialogue is reminding the American people that domestic initiatives are vital to help restart our economy and create new jobs for our workers. Your trade-adjustment assistance expansion is already helping to ensure that workers have the skills and training to fill those new jobs.

While such a discussion must emphasize that our trade policy will continue to provide assistance to workers, industries and communities dislocated because of trade, it must also recognize that trade and trade agreements are simply not the major cause of job loss in the United States. While trade agreements can have adverse effects on specific industries, workers and communities, far more important is their ability to open new markets, generate exports, economic growth and substantial new opportunities.

America's future prosperity requires both domestic and international initiatives to grow the economy and promote American competitiveness and engagement in an increasingly interconnected world. As the world's largest exporter of goods and services that is recording a \$21 billion manufactured-goods surplus with our free-trade agreement partners, the United States benefits enormously from international engagement but also faces steep challenges, both from other countries' barriers and those here at home. As well, a re-affirmation of America's longstanding commitment to open markets will help the United States to forge closer ties with our trading partners and improve our standing in the world.

In order to grow our economy, ensure good-paying jobs for Americans, enhance our national security and renew our country's leadership position in the world, the United States cannot stand still in the international economic sphere. Rather, we need to revitalize our export and international trade leadership by moving forward actively on multilateral, regional and bilateral market-opening opportunities. In particular, we urge you to pursue major market-opening agreements with the Asia-Pacific and beyond, as

well as more focused initiatives on an industry and country-specific basis, including the passage of the three pending trade agreements. Such initiatives will help enable U.S. workers and industries to gain access to the 95 percent of the world's consumers, who command 80 percent of the world's purchasing power and who live outside U.S. borders.

These agreements are not just about lowering tariffs – they provide significant legal protections that foster trade and enhance American competitiveness in the international economy. This is particularly the case for protecting intellectual property, which is essential to America's economic future. Trade-agreement provisions provide high-level protections for American technology and innovation. The more trade agreements we have, the more we can foster our own innovation and the rule of law.

Failure to lead will be costly to the United States. Our manufacturers, farmers and service providers will continue to face significant barriers in foreign markets and will also be disadvantaged vis-à-vis many of their foreign competitors whose governments are negotiating agreements to ensure that their industries and workers have new market-opening opportunities.

We look forward to working with you as you move forward on the international economic, trade and investment agenda. To that end, we respectfully request a meeting with you to discuss how we can work together to achieve America's international economic priorities in the years ahead. In preparation for that meeting, it would be useful for key members of your international economic team to meet with the top representatives of the organizations that we head, which are listed below. We will follow up on this request shortly.

Respectfully,



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