

September 9, 2013

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman
Senate Committee on Finance
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dave Camp
Chairman
House Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Finance
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sander Levin
Ranking Member
House Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Baucus and Camp and Ranking Members Hatch and Levin:

As leading U.S. business and agriculture associations and founding members of the Trade Benefits America coalition, we strongly support your bipartisan efforts to develop and pass updated Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) legislation. TPA is a critical tool for advancing pending and future trade agreements that support U.S. economic growth and jobs and benefit American businesses, farmers, and workers. We see strong bipartisan support for TPA and urge movement on TPA legislation as soon as possible, so it can be passed this year and help ensure strong outcomes in both ongoing and future U.S. trade negotiations.

Since President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the 1930s, every President through 2007 has had the authority from Congress to negotiate trade agreements that open new markets for American goods and services and help ensure a rules-based system for two-way trade. However, Congress last enacted such authority in 2002, and it lapsed in 2007. U.S. companies face many new challenges to doing business in the global marketplace since TPA was written more than a decade ago.

Currently, the United States is pursuing an exceptionally ambitious and diverse range of trade negotiations, including the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, and the Trade in Services Agreement. These negotiations involve important 21st century trade issues – such as foreign restrictions on cross-border data flows, unfair competition from state-owned enterprises, intellectual property rights, forced localization barriers to trade and investment, and international regulatory cooperation – that have evolved or emerged since 2002. By updating and passing TPA, Congress can help shape the negotiating goals pursued by U.S. negotiators while also strengthening the hand of those negotiators in achieving solid outcomes favorable to the United States.

Passage of TPA also will help reinforce the Congressional-Executive Branch partnership that has long proven critical to negotiating U.S. trade agreements and getting them implemented by Congress. In doing so, TPA helps ensure a meaningful role for Congress at all stages of trade negotiations by mandating that the Executive Branch seek input from Congress before, during and after negotiations and by specifying negotiating objectives that the Executive Branch must pursue.

We are fully committed to continuing to work with you, other members of Congress, and the Administration to press for passage of TPA legislation this year to help ensure high-standard outcomes in pending and future trade agreements that support U.S. growth and jobs.

Sincerely,

American Farm Bureau Federation
Business Roundtable
Coalition of Services Industries
Emergency Committee for American Trade
National Association of Manufacturers
National Foreign Trade Council
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
U.S. Council for International Business

C: Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid
Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell
Speaker of the House John Boehner
House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi