



December 3, 2015

Speaker Paul Ryan  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

*Via Email*

Dear Speaker Ryan, Democratic Leader Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Reid:

We, the undersigned associations, applaud actions by the House of Representatives on Tuesday, December 1, 2015. We are pleased to hear that the House has called for and appointed Conferees, and that the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement bill is in Conference, where the remaining matters will be resolved. We are writing to urge you to take prompt action and pass reconciled Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement legislation next week, before Congress adjourns.

It has been over 20 years since the U.S. Congress has passed true customs modernization legislation. The Customs Modernization Act was passed in 1993. The most recent customs modernization and reauthorization came in the wake of 9/11, and focused primarily on transitioning U.S. Customs to the newly formed Department of Homeland Security.

During the 114th Congress, the House and Senate have passed independent and differing versions of the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement bill. While we understand that there are still differences between the legislative texts, we strongly encourage the passage of the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement bill within the 2015 legislative calendar. Continued customs modernization is essential to providing U.S. Customs and Border Protection (U.S. CBP) the support it needs to safeguard America's borders while enhancing economic prosperity, and ensuring stability for American importers and exporters.

The bill is vital to the U.S. economy. We urge Conferees to resolve the outstanding issues, so that the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement bill can move forward, in a bipartisan fashion, for the President's signature this year. As we move into 2016, the U.S. government as well as importers and exports are faced with a number of hurdles, including:

- Outdated e-commerce and business practices, which are in need of updating and implementation prior to the end of the holiday shipping season. This legislation particularly benefits small businesses and consumers by raising the de minimis amount from USD\$200 to USD\$800, reduces paperwork burdens, and facilitates the movement of cargo
- December 24, 2015, the effective date of a measure that if not corrected will cause a WTO compliance issue exposing the U.S. to WTO challenges

- Codification of CBP operations and management must be done while there is a sitting Commissioner of Customs - which may change soon due to the end of the current Administration
- Ensuring swift and successful implementation of Trade Facilitation measures such as ACE/ITDS, (the U.S. single window)
- The U.S. election cycle could complicate Congressional activity in 2016, further delaying vital and time sensitive Reauthorization measures

In closing, the undersigned organizations, representing businesses, and professional firms and services from all sectors of the U.S. economy, reiterate our support for the positive movement this week on the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement bill. With the divergent versions of the bill in Conference, we believe this will ensure prompt resolution of remaining differences, allowing the bill to move quickly through the process and secure passage by Congress next week.

Sincerely,

Airforwarders Association  
 American Apparel & Footwear Association  
 American Association of Exporters and Importers  
 American Chemistry Council  
 American Petroleum Institute  
 American Trucking Association  
 BACM  
 Canadian / American Border Trade Alliance  
 Cargo Airline Association  
 Coalition of Services Industries  
 CompTIA  
 Express Delivery and Logistics Association  
 Fashion Accessories Shippers Association  
 Footwear Distributors & Retailers of America  
 Foreign Trade Association  
 Gemini Shippers Association  
 National Association of Foreign-Trade Zones  
 National Foreign Trade Council  
 National Retail Federation  
 Travel Goods Association  
 U.S. Fashion Industry Association  
 United States Council for International Business

CC:

House Conferees:

Rep. Kevin Brady (R-TX)  
 Rep. Sandy Levin (D-MI)  
 Rep. Pat Tiberi (R-OH)  
 Rep. Dave Reichert (R-WA)  
 Rep. Linda Sánchez (D-CA)

Senate Conferees:

Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-GA)  
 Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR)  
 Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY)  
 Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)  
 Sen. Oren Hatch (R-UT)  
 Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX)  
 Sen. John Thune (R-SD)

Members of the Senate Committee on Finance  
 Members of the House Committee on Ways and Means