

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

January 27, 2015

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Ambassador Michael Froman  
United States Trade Representative  
600 Seventeenth Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20508

Dear President Obama and Ambassador Froman:

As our country continues to work on international trade agreements, we write to voice our support for trade policies that enhance economic opportunity at home, protect American jobs from unfair competition abroad, and ensure the United States' position as a global leader for decades to come.

First, we are very concerned about multiple aspects of Trade Promotion Authority (TPA), or 'fast track' and the Trans-Pacific Partnership that is still under negotiation. We are opposed to the old, out-dated model for TPA that passed in 2002 and we want to note our concerns with the Trade Promotion Authority legislation introduced as the *Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities Act of 2014*. We appreciate the need to balance the Administration's prerogative to negotiate international agreements with Congress' responsibility to oversee commerce and protect our constituents' economic well-being. However, we believe this legislation lacked sufficient guarantees to ensure Congress' voice in shaping the substance of international trade agreements negotiated by the Administration. Our concern is that previous versions of TPA legislation did not ensure sufficient input of our constituents' concerns about the labor, environmental, and human rights protections that must be essential in the trade deals you are currently negotiating. We have great confidence in American workers' ability to compete in the international economy so long as we ensure they are on a level playing field, and it is our responsibility to ensure that playing field is as level as it can be.

Poorly drafted trade agreements can have devastating effects on our constituents. Although certain American businesses have benefited from new markets open to us as a result of trade agreements, far too often our nation fails to support many communities that have seen jobs move overseas. Congress has a fundamental obligation to provide input on trade agreements and ensure that our trade agreements achieve appropriate, positive results for the American people. We believe our trade policies must accomplish two critical goals: growing our economy and creating new jobs.

We cannot support trade agreements that outsource jobs to countries with grossly inadequate labor protections, wages that do not meet basic living standards, and working conditions that are outright dangerous. Similarly, we cannot accept trade agreements with weak or nonexistent

environmental protections that allow companies to escape responsible standards here in the United States by shifting manufacturing overseas to countries that lack basic protections. Worse, outsourcing manufacturing jobs to these nations can flood the American market with goods produced by underpaid workers in dangerous conditions, further exacerbating the unfairness for those businesses that do stay in the United States.

Simply put, trade policies must reflect our national economic interests and safeguard Congress' voice in this process.

We are concerned by reports of ongoing negotiations for the Trans-Pacific Partnership and believe that -- especially as the Administration comes closer to a proposed agreement -- greater transparency should be permitted. We urge you to release sufficient information to all interested parties so that debate on the merits of the proposal can move from the theoretical to the facts. We believe that we cannot have an honest debate on the merits of the Trans-Pacific Partnership until Members of Congress and stakeholders are able to actually read the full text well before it is signed.

As negotiations continue, we also encourage the Administration to consider appropriate avenues for non-governmental interested parties, such as labor and environmental protection organizations, to have a formal voice that is either identical or parallel to the proposed investor-state dispute settlements. Though you have communicated with labor and environmental organizations, we encourage a mechanism by which interested parties that are not corporations have at least similar rights for redress as granted to corporations.

We also note our strongest support for the *Trade Adjustment Assistance Act of 2014*. Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs ensure that small businesses, manufacturing workers, farmers, and many others are able to better adjust to a rapidly changing global economy. Congress must pass a strong reauthorization of TAA that supports American workers and businesses and preserves the program into the future.

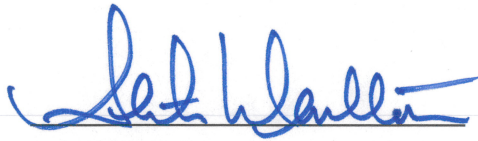
Further, it is possible that alternative procedures to 'fast track' legislation which in 2014 would have allowed for stronger labor and environmental protections to be added by Congress could, today in 2015, instead result in weakened protections under a Republican-controlled Congress. Improvements that could have been passed in a previous Congress face significant hurdles today in the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress. If given the opportunity, today's Congress is more likely to remove, rather than strengthen, environmental and labor standards negotiated by the Administration. We look forward to meeting with you to discuss how we can safeguard the ability of Congress to protect and strengthen these provisions as the process moves forward, and to ensure we enact agreements that enjoy broad support.

Trade -- done the right way -- can help our communities and create jobs. We are keenly aware that unfair trade policies can be devastating to our constituents and can send U.S. jobs overseas. We urge you to increase transparency in this process and involve more stakeholders to help produce trade policies that Members of Congress can support -- policies that create new American jobs, strengthen labor and environmental standards, grow our economy, and ensure our standing in the world for years to come. We share the view of our constituents that if you

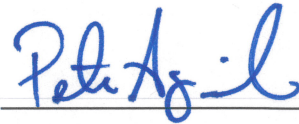
play by the rules, you should have a fair shot at the American dream. That is the American way, and our trade agreements must ensure economic opportunity for future generations.

We look forward to meeting with you soon to discuss our concerns and the status of negotiations of international trade agreements.

Sincerely,



Seth Moulton  
Member of Congress



Pete Aguilar  
Member of Congress



Norma Torres  
Member of Congress