



February 5, 2024

The Honorable Mike Crapo
Chairman
Senate Finance Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
Senate Finance Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Re: February 6, 2025 Hearing to Consider the Nomination of Jamieson Greer, of Maryland, to be United States Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary

Dear Chairman Crapo and Ranking Member Wyden,

The American Association of Exporters and Importers (AAEI) supports confirmation of President Trump's nominee for United States Trade Representative, Jamieson Greer, and urges the Senate Finance Committee to consider the major issues effecting American importers and exporters. In this submission AAEI outlines what those issues are and why they necessitate consideration when deliberating the confirmation of Mr. Greer for USTR.

For over 100 years, AAEI has served as a prominent national voice for the United States' international trade community. AAEI proudly represents a diverse range of industry sectors within the global trade landscape, comprising manufacturers, importers, exporters, wholesalers, retailers, and various service providers such as customs brokers, freight forwarders, trade advisors, insurers, security providers, transportation interests and ports. Many of its members are small businesses seeking opportunities to export to foreign markets, while the larger entities help to fuel the economy through their supply chains. As the premier U.S. international trade organization, AAEI is recognized for its expertise in the day-to-day facilitation of trade, including the administration and compliance with import and export laws of the United States, making it an indispensable resource for those directly involved in and impacted by developments in international trade.

On January 20th, President Trump signed the America First Trade Agenda Executive Order outlining his administration's approach to international trade. It is essential for all actions outlined in the order to take place with consultation of U.S. importers and exporters that will lead to positive outcomes for Americans.

1) Tariffs

Since the start of the second Trump administration, the conversation of tariffs has been at the top of the agenda. AAEI understands the Trump Administration's goal to create greater balance in the U.S. trade relationships and creating fair trade. Any tariff proposal must consider the impact on supply chains. The uncertainty around tariff proposals has caused importers and exporters to plan for countless scenarios. The uncertainty has had negative impacts on their business. For each tranche of the tariffs in 2019-20, USTR established a process by which importers could request a temporary exclusion of products subject to the action. These exclusions were granted for a limited time and with few exceptions. We are urging USTR to restore a transparent and effective exclusion process for emergency and investigatory tariffs. Due process as it pertains to the Trump administration's new tariff policy is imperative. AAEI also requests that the USTR work with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to take a deliberative and transparent approach to tariff implementation.

2) Impact of Free Trade Agreements

Establishing and negotiating free trade agreements is a central part of the role of USTR. With the USMCA agreement coming up for review this year, USTR must be committed to working with Congress in conjunction with the trade to improve facilitation of free trade between our North American trading partners. This includes simplifying rules of origin requirements and easing regulatory burden on U.S. importers and exporters.

Developing new trade agreements with the India, Philippines, Kenya, the United Kingdom, and other valued trading partners while also improving existing agreements should be a priority consideration from the committee.

3) Preference programs

AAEI implores the next USTR to work with Congress to complete work and report legislation to reauthorize the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), including provisions to ensure that this program is renewed on a fully retroactive basis in addition to other vital preference programs. The Miscellaneous Tariff Bill (MTB) and programs like GSP solidify U.S. relationships with developing countries, ensuring that these countries improve their approaches to the environment, human rights, and the rule of law. To the extent that the U.S. government is looking for reliable partners that share U.S. values as a viable alternative to imports from China, GSP countries are ready to fill this role. They simply need a signal in the right direction. GSP can send that message clearly. Since GSP expired in 2020, U.S. companies have paid over \$2 billion in extra taxes while also dealing with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, high freight costs,

and supply chain disruptions in both the U.S. and beneficiary countries. These issues have contributed to high and persistent U.S. inflation while hindering American companies' efforts to build more diversified and resilient supply chains.

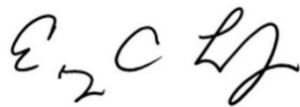
4) Customs Reauthorization

AAEI urges the next USTR, CBP, and the Senate Finance Committee to continue to prioritize modernizing U.S. Customs to streamline imports and exports and foster fair trade. Prioritizing Next Generation Customs will enhance efficiency, compliance, and international competitiveness. It will ensure that the U.S. protects its borders from infringing goods and illicit trade.

By ensuring the next USTR will take decisive action in consultation with the trade, we can bolster the U.S. economy and strengthen its global trade leadership, paving the way for a more prosperous and resilient international trade landscape for years to come.

If you have any questions or require any clarification of our responses, please contact my staff lead Mitchell Hart at MHart@aaei-hq.org.

Sincerely,



Eugene C. Laney
President & CEO