

May 8, 2013

Acting United States Trade Representative Demetrios Marantis
Office of the United State Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20508



Dear Ambassador Marantis:

On behalf of the members of the Washington Council on International Trade – manufacturers, service providers, farmers and ranchers, retailers and other Washington state employers who value strong, pro-trade policies that increase our international competitiveness – I am pleased to submit our response to the Request for Comments concerning the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

We strongly believe that a robust, comprehensive agreement has the potential to significantly benefit Washington employers and our peers across the country. The European Union is one of Washington's largest trading partners, accounting for 14 percent of our state's goods exports and five of the top ten country destinations for our services exports. A successful TTIP would open up significant market opportunities for Washington's retailers, manufacturers, service providers and farmers.

Eliminating tariffs is a critical piece of an effective TTIP agreement, but it is equally important to address other non-tariff barriers to trade, such as regulatory barriers. For example, EU sanitary and phytosanitary regulations on agricultural and food imports prevent many Washington farmers, ranchers and food producers from exporting their products to the EU, while pharmaceutical products must undergo lengthy, costly tests in both the EU and the U.S. TTIP must find a way to increase regulatory cooperation so that regulatory approval of a product in either the U.S. or EU allows for its sale in both markets.

Liberalizing services trade is another important component of a successful TTIP agreement. The inclusion of binding commitments to provide transparency, impartiality and due process with regard to licensing and qualification requirements and procedures is a high priority for our state's companies. Specifically, reaching agreement on data privacy and the movement of cross-border data flows is key to many of our high technology sectors.

Finally, Washington's aerospace industry would also benefit from a comprehensive TTIP. Our state's 650 aerospace companies could expand their customer base in Europe with lower barriers to trade and streamlined customs procedures. Given the size of the two economies, a successful TTIP agreement could also boost long-term demand for commercial aircraft in the EU and U.S., the two largest markets for those products.

With so much potential for economic growth, it is imperative that USTR negotiate a comprehensive TTIP agreement that will reduce both tariff and non-tariff barriers, increase regulatory compatibility and transparency, and open up new opportunities in sectors like

services trade. The relationship between the EU and U.S. is already strong, and transatlantic trade accounts for 30 percent of world trade; however, there is room for further economic integration that will spur economic growth on both sides of the Atlantic.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments, and we look forward to working with you toward the successful conclusion of these negotiations. If you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 206.389.7273 or erics@wcit.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eric Schinfeld".

Eric Schinfeld
President, Washington Council on International Trade