

MESSAGE FROM THE USTR

Trade has been an important part of the United States' economic recovery, and it is a critical component of President Obama's forward-looking strategy to unlock opportunities that will create jobs, promote growth and strengthen the middle class.

Since 2009, U.S. exports of goods and services have increased by almost 50 percent, growing roughly three times faster than the economy as a whole, and contributing a third of our total economic growth. Nearly 300,000 American companies now export goods to foreign markets, supporting jobs domestically. Additionally, 98 percent of these companies are small and medium size businesses.

These increases in U.S. exports support real job growth for Americans. Each billion dollars of increased exports supports between 5,400 and 5,900 jobs, on average. And over the last four years, exports have supported 1.6 million additional private sector jobs – jobs that pay 13 percent to 18 percent more on average than non-export related jobs.

The United States is one of the most open economies in the world. With an average applied tariff of 1.3 percent, a fair and transparent regulatory environment, and an open investment regime, U.S. barriers to imports and investment from abroad are among the lowest in the world. But U.S. exports destined for other countries continue to face an array of tariff and nontariff barriers. These barriers constrain our ability to support job growth, and in some cases threaten the livelihoods of hard working American workers and manufacturers, farmers and ranchers, and American entrepreneurs and investors whose businesses depend on their ability to sell their high-quality goods and services to the world.

The top trade priority for this Administration is to negotiate trade agreements that will open markets and unlock opportunity for American goods and services exporters, and to vigorously monitor and enforce those trade agreements in order to fully protect our hard-earned trade rights.

In order for our workers and businesses to benefit fully from the trade agreements we negotiate, our trading partners must play by the rules to which they have agreed. Over the last five years, the United States has redoubled its trade enforcement efforts and has taken a whole-of-government approach to enforcement, and USTR works with agencies throughout the Government to level the playing field for American workers and businesses. Every office at USTR plays a vital role in our efforts to monitor and enforce our trade agreements. In addition, in 2012, President Obama created the Interagency Trade Enforcement Center (ITEC) to support those efforts. ITEC brings together staff from multiple agencies with a diverse set of skills and expertise, and is designed to buttress and broaden even further the capacity of the Obama Administration to pursue the strongest possible trade enforcement agenda. Working hand in hand with USTR staff, ITEC has played a vital role in multiple enforcement actions regarding China, Argentina, India and Indonesia. The information contained in the NTE represents one of the important sources upon which USTR and ITEC can draw in their efforts to enforce our trade rights, strengthen the rules-based trading system, and identify and resolve barriers to U.S. exports.

The NTE report plays an important role by shining a spotlight on significant trade barriers that our goods and services exporters face. This report provides, where feasible, quantitative estimates of the impact of these foreign practices on the value of U.S. exports. Information is also included on selected actions taken to eliminate damaging foreign trade barriers.

Ambassador Michael Froman
United States Trade Representative
March 31, 2014