

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20508

July 12, 2017

His Excellency
Dr. Joo Hyunghwan
Minister of Trade, Industry and Energy
Sejong, Republic of Korea

Dear Minister Joo:

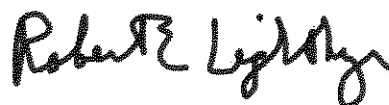
As provided under Article 22.2 of the U.S.-Korea (KORUS) Free Trade Agreement, I request the convening of a special session of the Joint Committee soon in Washington, D.C., to consider matters affecting the operation of the Agreement, including possible amendments and modifications. I believe that this session and the follow-on negotiations will provide an opportunity to review progress on the implementation of the Agreement, resolve several problems regarding market access in Korea for U.S. exports, and, most importantly, address our significant trade imbalance.

Korea is an important ally and key trading partner and in order to strengthen our relationship, we need free, fair, and balanced trade. As our two Presidents committed to “foster expanded and balanced trade while creating reciprocal benefits and fair treatment” at the June U.S.-Korea Summit, it is imperative that we work together to ensure that the economic partnership between our two countries is not only strong and vibrant, but also fair, and that the KORUS Agreement benefits the U.S. economy as much as it does that of Korea.

A key focus of the Trump Administration is on reducing our trade deficits with trading partners around the world, and we have real concerns about our significant trade imbalance with Korea. The United States has had a persistent goods deficit with Korea for nearly two decades. When the KORUS Agreement was negotiated, expectations were high that both of our economies would realize significant gains. However, our overall deficit with Korea has increased, and our goods deficit has doubled since the Agreement entered into force. It is critical that we achieve real progress that fosters a truly fair and level playing field, and a more balanced trade relationship.

The Agreement requires a special session of the Joint Committee to be held within 30 days. I propose that our staffs meet to agree on a date for this session in the very near term and to finalize other details, including the agenda. I look forward to productive negotiations in the Joint Committee, and to working with your Government during this process.

Sincerely yours,



Ambassador Robert E. Lighthizer
United States Trade Representative