

**ALABAMA ♦ ARKANSAS ♦ CONNECTICUT ♦ DELAWARE ♦ GEORGIA
IOWA ♦ MICHIGAN ♦ MISSISSIPPI ♦ NORTH DAKOTA
SOUTH CAROLINA ♦ SOUTH DAKOTA ♦ UTAH ♦ VERMONT ♦ WASHINGTON**

July 25, 2012

The Honorable Barack Obama
President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear President Obama, Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Boehner, and Minority Leader Pelosi:

We are writing to request that you work together to approve, before the August congressional recess, legislation to graduate Russia from the Jackson-Vanik amendment and establish Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) with Russia.

As Governors, we know from first-hand experience in our states that expanding opportunities for international trade and attracting foreign investment are essential to promoting U.S. economic growth and creating new and better jobs. Russia's impending membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO) offers a significant opportunity to increase our trade and investment with the world's ninth largest economy.

Russia is expected to join the WTO this summer, at which point Russia will begin to significantly open its markets to other countries. With about 142 million people and a growing middle class, Russia's joining the WTO offers our companies, workers and farmers tremendous new opportunities to sell their goods and services.

U.S. exports to Russia have been growing in recent years, but not as quickly as those of our foreign competitors to Russia. According to some estimates, Russia's accession to the WTO could—provided Congress approves PNTR for Russia—double U.S. exports from about \$11 billion in 2011 to \$22 billion in 2017, adding jobs in services, agriculture, and manufacturing.

From our perspective as Governors, we see the potential for each of our states to increase their exports to Russia, but Congress needs to pass PNTR to help realize this potential.

The companies, workers and farmers in our states are ready to take full advantage of Russia opening its markets when it joins the WTO this summer. Our problem is they can't until the Congress passes the necessary PNTR legislation.

As you know, the U.S. economic benefits from Russia's accession to the WTO are not guaranteed. The United States will be able to enjoy all the benefits of Russia's accession *only* if Congress passes legislation to graduate Russia from the Jackson-Vanik amendment and to establish PNTR with Russia. If Congress does not act, Russia will still be able to join the WTO, and our foreign competitors from the other 150+ WTO member countries, rather than our constituents, will get the full and enforceable benefits from Russia's new open markets.

We also encourage the United States Trade Representative (USTR) to hold Russia accountable in reducing non-tariff trade barriers for our agricultural and industrial products and services, and ensure that trade decisions are science-based. Our farmers, ranchers and manufacturers deserve nothing less.

Economic growth and job creation are the overarching priority at all levels of government today. We hope you will work together to pass PNTR legislation before August to ensure that American companies, workers and farmers can effectively compete in Russia when it joins the WTO this summer. We stand ready to support you in this effort.

Sincerely,



Governor Christine O. Gregoire
Washington



Governor Dennis Daugaard
South Dakota



Governor Mike Beebe
Arkansas



Governor Rick Snyder
Michigan



Governor Terry Branstad
Iowa




Governor Jack Dalrymple
North Dakota




Governor Gary Herbert
Utah



Governor Nathan Deal
Georgia




Governor Dannel Malloy
Connecticut




Governor Nikki Haley
South Carolina



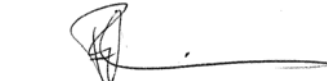
Governor Jack Markell
Delaware



Governor Robert Bentley
Alabama



Governor Phil Bryant
Mississippi



Governor Peter Shumlin
Vermont

cc: The Honorable Ron Kirk, Ambassador, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative