

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

May 5, 2021

The Honorable Katherine Tai  
Ambassador  
Office of the United States Trade Representative  
600 17th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Ambassador Tai,

We congratulate you on your nomination by President Biden and your confirmation by the United States Senate. We look forward to working with you to promote trade policies that benefit American workers, enhance the ability of American businesses to compete in the global marketplace for goods and services, protect the environment, and advance our nation's broader economic and national security goals, including countering Chinese influence around the world.

We write today regarding the decision made by the previous Administration to withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Our current trade policy in the Asia-Pacific region is in need of a strategic direction that includes robust engagement with our allies in the region, similar to what was envisioned by the 12-country Trans-Pacific Partnership. We believe that withdrawing from this trade agreement was a missed opportunity to strengthen U.S. leadership in the global economy and reinforce our commitment to a rules-based system for international trade.

The stakes are exceptionally high. The Asia-Pacific region is home to China, one of America's geopolitical rivals, whose interests and values diverge sharply from our own. As you know, the United States and China are competing across virtually every functional and geographic domain. However, in the trade and investment space, China's practices have violated international rules and fundamental principles of fairness, causing harm to American workers and businesses.

With that said, the Asia-Pacific region is also home to some of America's closest allies and partners, many of which are some of the fastest growing markets in the world. There is no doubt that any successful effort to strengthen our domestic economy, and ensure that American companies can compete on a level playing field with their Chinese counterparts, will require the United States to exercise leadership in the Asia-Pacific region and fortify our relationships in the region. A key element of this effort should be to determine the best course of action for re-engagement with our allies in this region by examining the 2017 decision to withdraw from the 12-country TPP before it entered into force.

The decision to withdraw from the TPP was made without meaningful debate in Congress regarding the merits (and demerits) of the TPP as negotiated and the economic and foreign policy ramifications of withdrawal. For our part, we have consistently expressed the view that withdrawal from the TPP was misguided and short-sighted. Unfortunately, it has only served to weaken the United States, empower China, put American workers and businesses at a

competitive disadvantage, and cede leadership in arguably the most strategically vital and economically dynamic region of the world.

We acknowledge that much has changed in the years since the negotiation of the TPP, and that there are significant political obstacles to negotiating an agreement to rejoin the TPP in its current form. As we consider our re-engagement in the Asia-Pacific region, we understand that we must also consider the merits and demerits of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), which was signed by the 11 other TPP countries in 2018 without the United States. However, we believe that the bipartisan passage of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement serves as an example of the will and the ability of American leaders, in both the executive and legislative branches, to engage with our allies to write the rules of international trade.

In closing, we thank you for your attention to this matter, and we look forward to working closely with you to develop comprehensive, multilateral free trade agreements with our allies that take into consideration the merits of the TPP and its approach to the Asia-Pacific region, while also building upon the successes of comprehensive trade agreements in recent years.

Sincerely,



---

Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator



---

John Cornyn  
United States Senator



---

Stephanie Murphy  
Member of Congress



---

Adam Kinzinger  
Member of Congress