

April 20, 2015

Dear Members of the Washington Congressional Delegation:

We mayors of Washington State urge you to vote in favor of President Obama's trade agenda.

Thank you for your service and for representing our state in the nation's Capital. As local leaders, we see the challenges facing our communities every day. Regardless of party affiliation or size of the cities we represent, we know that the people we serve have one thing on their minds: jobs.

International trade is the single largest driver of our state's economy – supporting 40 percent of jobs in Washington and creating tens of thousands of jobs for our residents. Because of this, we believe the United States must play a stronger role in the negotiation of new trade agreements and the creation of global trade standards. We have a responsibility to lead.

Nearly 90% of companies that export from our state are small businesses; the backbone of our economy. The best way we can support them is to help them gain more customers. These new trade agreements will make our local businesses more competitive in the global economy, open up opportunities in foreign markets and reduce barriers to global trade. This includes long-term renewal of the Export-Import Bank charter, so it can continue to level the global playing field for U.S. exporters and workers and provide certainty for businesses. Companies exporting from the U.S. are often at a disadvantage because we face significant quotas, trade barriers and high tariffs compared to our competitors. The U.S. ranks 130th out of 138 countries for highest tariffs faced.

Our nation's trade agreements at a minimum must do two things: reflect our values and serve as a tool to have those values adopted by countries around the world. President Obama is working to do just that with his trade agenda. His stated goal is to create the most progressive trade deals in history – including robust provisions to promote good governance, improve human rights, and raise the bar for labor and environmental standards in all participating countries.

We are here to support you and urge you work with the President to move this trade agenda forward. If the United States fails to engage globally, the rest of the world will move ahead without us and establish trade rules that put workers and businesses here at home at a competitive disadvantage.

Please join us and support high-standard trade agreements that benefit Washington cities and the people we all represent.

Respectfully yours,