



United States Department of State

*Washington, D.C. 20520*

April 29, 2015

An Open Letter to Members of Congress:

As the Ambassadors of the United States of America to the 11 other nations participating in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), we welcome the introduction of the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 (TPA). We can think of no joint effort that is as important for U.S. interests in the region, both economically and strategically, as passing TPA and TPP.

Passing TPA will allow the United States to speak with one voice when it comes to advancing our interests and values through trade. TPA will provide the framework for the forthcoming consideration of the TPP, an agreement that will shape the future of U.S. economic, diplomatic, and security interests in the Asia-Pacific region – a dynamic and strategically critical part of the world stretching from Asia to the Americas.

First and foremost, the TPP will bolster American economic strength by supporting more high-paying U.S. jobs, strengthening the middle class, and spurring growth. Over ninety-five percent of the world's consumers live outside the United States, and close to one-third reside within the Asia-Pacific region. The ability of U.S. businesses and workers to compete effectively in these important, fast-growing markets is vital to our nation's economy.

The TPP will also transform the economies of the Asia-Pacific region. Beyond opening new markets to American goods and services, it will raise standards for regional trade and investment, promote American values in partnership with friends and allies around the region, and ensure greater regional prosperity and stability.

We have each seen firsthand the increasing challenges that U.S. workers and businesses face in the Asia-Pacific region. Today, they are being forced to compete on an uneven playing field in the fastest-growing region of the world. Many of our main global competitors have already negotiated or are negotiating trade agreements in the region, putting U.S. goods and services exports at a disadvantage relative to some of our main international competitors.

Yet the challenge to U.S. interests in the Asia-Pacific region is broader. Other trade agreements do not reflect the best practices we seek to promote through our trade agreements nor do they embody U.S. interests and values. We believe trade agreements should reduce tariffs, but they must also contain robust trade rules to ensure that trade is transparent and fair, promotes innovation, strengthens environmental and labor protections, and ensures fair competition by State-owned enterprises. TPP will achieve these objectives.

It is critical for U.S. interests that the emerging trade rules of the Asia-Pacific region are built on these principles. If the United States does not engage to establish ambitious regional trade rules through TPP, weaker rules are likely to become the new regional standard, hurting U.S. economic and security interests and undermining our leadership role in the region.

At a time of economic and geopolitical uncertainty, our friends and allies in the region have warmly welcomed the United States' rebalance to Asia. TPP will demonstrate to the entire region that the United States is prepared to make the commitments necessary to sustain our leadership in the Asia-Pacific.

American diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region has always benefited from a strong bipartisan conviction that the United States is and always will be a leading Pacific power. The region's future is inextricably entwined with America's own, and our friends and partners are looking to the U.S. for a clear signal that our engagement will continue. The TPP has a critical role to play in writing the next chapter of this decades-long commitment.

We strongly urge Congress to lend its support to the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015.

Sincerely,

John Berry  
U.S. Ambassador to Australia

Craig Allen  
U.S. Ambassador to Brunei Darussalam

Bruce A. Heyman  
U.S. Ambassador to Canada

Michael A. Hammer  
U.S. Ambassador to Chile

Caroline Kennedy  
U.S. Ambassador to Japan

Joseph Y. Yun  
U.S. Ambassador to Malaysia

Earl Anthony Wayne  
U.S. Ambassador Mexico

Mark Gilbert  
U.S. Ambassador to New Zealand

Brian A. Nichols  
U.S. Ambassador to Peru

Kirk Wagar  
U.S. Ambassador to Singapore

Ted Osius  
U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam