

Jay Timmons
President and CEO

March 15, 2023

President Joseph Biden
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

At the Feb. 28 meeting of the National Association of Manufacturers Board of Directors, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, in an address to the American business community, declared that Ukraine is “the place where democracy will defeat tyranny” and underscored the “power of a united democratic world.” Manufacturers likewise emphasize at every opportunity that democracy, the rule of law, freedom and opportunity are central to our future and our way of life. To protect our shared values, it is vital that we strengthen our global partnerships, including our economic partnerships, for the good of our people and people around the world.

One of the primary ways the United States can better assert its global economic leadership is through the negotiation and implementation of strong and lasting trade agreements with our friends and allies. These agreements can and should promote American values, comprehensively open markets for American-made goods, create more export opportunities, support supply chain resiliency and counter rising economic threats from China.

Unfortunately, the U.S. has not entered into a trade agreement with a new trading partner in more than a decade. Our competitors are actively negotiating new agreements that exclude us, putting manufacturers at a disadvantage. That is why manufacturers respectfully urge your administration to initiate new, cutting-edge agreements. By advancing an ambitious trade agreement agenda, we can ensure that the U.S., and not competitors like China, writes the rules for the global economy and trading system.

Opening markets overseas is critical for manufacturers, our workers and their communities, as our industry cannot grow or create jobs just by selling to U.S. customers. We also need to sell to the 95% of the global population living outside of the U.S. The jobs of more than 6 million manufacturing workers in the U.S. depend on exports, and America’s 20 trade agreement partners purchase about half of all U.S.-manufactured exports, supporting more than 3 million jobs. And critically, American workers in the most export-intensive sectors earn 26% more than other sectors, on average.

It is critical that the U.S. open key markets with which we do not have comprehensive trade agreements. That includes the 27 EU countries, Ecuador, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, Uruguay and Vietnam.

Your administration's efforts to negotiate a range of economic frameworks, such as the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, the Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity and bilateral frameworks with Kenya and Taiwan, indicate that the U.S. is willing to prioritize some areas of importance to manufacturers, including digital trade and supply chains. There is also ample opportunity to expand these deals so that they reach their full potential. That can be done by eliminating tariffs and nontariff barriers and strengthening standards in areas such as intellectual property, investment and regulatory trade.

In addition to strengthening our transatlantic alliances by negotiating comprehensive trade agreements with our partners in Europe, including the European Union, the United Kingdom and Ukraine, manufacturers respectfully urge your administration to launch discussions to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, which would allow the U.S. to counter China's influence in the region.

As always, it is vital that we enforce existing U.S. trade agreements and trade rules. As I discussed with Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo during the North American Leaders' Summit in Mexico City in January, that includes holding our partners accountable by pushing forcefully for the reversal of policies and regulatory actions that contradict the letter and spirit of the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement.

Mr. President, we acknowledge fully that this is an ambitious agenda, but that is what is required to meet this moment. We are confident that we can advance such an agenda that will deliver for our country, the manufacturing industry, our workers and our communities, and we stand ready to work with your administration to get this done.

At a time when democracy and free enterprise are under attack from forces around the world, America, as it has done in decades past, can provide the leadership needed to defend our values, our institutions and our way of life.

Respectfully,



Jay Timmons