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WCIT Comments on U.S.- China Trade War

Lori Otto Punke, president of The Washington Council on International Trade, issued the following statement regarding the recent escalation of U.S. tariffs against China:

“The Washington Council on International Trade and its members are deeply concerned about the state of U.S.-China trade relations and the continued escalation of tariffs by both parties. Washington state exporters can compete in a global market, but they need predictability, certainty, and respect for the rule of law.

“Earlier this week Washington state exporters received relief from the dispute with Canada and Mexico when both countries removed retaliatory tariffs against the U.S. action on steel and aluminum. We can’t celebrate, as unfortunately, the breakdown in talks between the U.S. and China has led to an increase in duties and greater uncertainty in the market, particularly for Washington state’s agricultural interests.

“The imposition of retaliatory tariffs by China and the continued U.S. saber-rattling in the form of potential new tariffs on the remainder of U.S. imports from China is not leading to a solution. We note with concern that Washington State interests are left behind as the Administration focuses on the harm that is accruing to farmers in the Midwest.

“We support the Trump Administration’s goal of leveling the playing field for U.S. companies doing business in China by seeking structural reforms in the Chinese economy, particularly around market access and intellectual property protections, but take issue with the tactics which are burdening U.S. exporters and U.S. consumers who are bearing the brunt of the extra duties.

“Tariffs are a blunt instrument that hurt the U.S. economy. China is Washington state’s largest trading partner, so tariffs place a heavy burden on our businesses, farmers, workers, and consumers.

“We hope the two sides will return to the negotiating table and reach a resolution soon that creates a stable and predictable environment where U.S.-China trade can flourish.”