



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WCIT Shares Ports Impacts Resulting from Tariff Policy

SEATTLE – WCIT shared a recent West Coast Ports letter highlighting the impacts of the ongoing U.S.-China trade dispute. Six of the largest West Coast ports expressed concerns regarding the increased tariffs and the adverse effects on U.S. businesses and consumers.

"Washington's ports are gateways to the rest of the world," said WCIT President, Lori Otto Punke.

"While we should absolutely be working to level the playing field for U.S. goods and services in markets around the world, the current tariff-first strategy is creating significant harm to our exporters, particularly among our farmers, seafood, and agriculture producers like potatoes, hay, salmon, cherries, and fresh crab."

Read the full letter here:

September 23, 2019

The Honorable Donald J. Trump

President of the United States of America

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue

Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

As the largest ports on the U.S. West Coast, we are writing to share our concerns that the long-term impacts of the escalating trade conflict between China and the United States will create irredeemable economic harm to employers, workers, residents and international partnerships along the entire coast and throughout the country.

U.S. trade policy impacts not only our core businesses, but also the success of our customers, and the livelihoods of our local communities. Collectively, our trade and logistics operations employ hundreds of thousands of family-wage workers whose jobs rely on dependable trade flows. In addition, the cargo handled at our ports flows to and from every corner of the country – from the Atlantic seaboard through



America's heartland to the West Coast – to support American businesses of every size. In fact, 38 percent of all U.S. exports to China by value go through our six ports alone.

The impacts of the back-and-forth tariffs between the United States and China have hit our exporters particularly hard, and we are hearing deep concern from our customers about their increasing challenges due to rising U.S. tariffs and Chinese retaliation. California is the largest exporter to China of any state in the nation; in 2018, California ports collectively saw a decrease of about 30 percent in exports to China. The impact is even more stark when viewed by specific commodities. Exports to China of wheat – grown across 10 states from the Pacific Northwest to the Midwest and exported via Washington and Oregon ports on the Columbia River – have nearly ceased this year. In California, export declines to China are seen in soybeans (-96.9 percent), grains (-85.5 percent), glass (-86.5 percent) and rubber (-74.9 percent). Similarly, the Northwest Seaport Alliance and Seattle-Tacoma International Airport exports have declined, including potatoes (-16.85 percent), hay (-49.93 percent), skins and hides (-47.89 percent), salmon (-47.71 percent), cherries (-54.56 percent) and fresh crab (-63.34 percent).

The negative impact to these exporters will be long-lasting because they cannot easily find new customers outside of China now that existing ones are being lost. For example, Oregon accounts for nearly all the hazelnuts grown in the United States – half of which are shipped to China; retaliatory tariffs could price Oregon growers out of the market and push Chinese consumers toward Turkish-grown hazelnuts. Washington dairy, California grapes and literally hundreds of other commodities are in similar jeopardy.

Over the past several years, each of our ports individually have submitted several tariff-related comment letters; testified before Congress and state legislatures; spoken with local and national media; and engaged directly with your Administration. Our core message in each of these communications has been the same: we support a balanced trading relationship with our global partners but are deeply concerned that the continued imposition of ever-increasing tariffs leads to higher costs on U.S. businesses and consumers and loss of valuable markets without any long-term strategic benefit.

There are justifiable concerns about how China's current trade practices are interfering with the success of U.S. exporters, and we appreciate that you are working toward long-term structural reforms in the U.S.-China trade relationship. However, our farmers, ranchers, fishing industry, manufacturers and retailers are already deeply harmed by the tariffs and retaliation to-date, and spreading and increasing the impact will make that problem worse. Instead, we urge you to pursue fair, mutually beneficial trade agreements that open new market access opportunities, create a level playing field for America businesses, and protect our workers and the environment.

We stand committed to working productively with your Administration to increase U.S. global trade competitiveness.



Sincerely,

Eugene Seroka Executive Director Port of Los Angeles
Mario Cordero Executive Director Port of Long Beach
John Wolfe Chief Executive Officer Northwest Seaport Alliance
Stephen P. Metruck Executive Director Port of Seattle
Eric Johnson Executive Director Port of Tacoma
Danny Wan Acting Executive Director Port of Oakland
Curtis Robinhold Executive Director Port of Portland

CC: U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross
U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Stephen Mnuchin
U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer
California Congressional Delegation
Oregon Congressional Delegation
Washington Congressional Delegation