



**Statement by Lori Otto Punke, President of the Washington Council on International Trade on Seizing the Opportunity to Reassert American Trade Leadership**

**SEATTLE, Washington. February 11, 2021** – The new Administration and Congress have an opportunity to work together to build smart international trade policies. This work is more critical given the pandemic-driven economic slowdown that has impacted Washington state farmers, workers, and businesses. By affirming our commitment to international trade and diplomacy, we can create the conditions for increased trade that can not only boost Washington state jobs, but also be a key part of a sustained economic recovery.

While there are many pressing issues facing the country, hitting the pause button on trade until we address other problems would be a missed opportunity. Trade is a key creator of employment and economic activity, including 40 percent of Washington state jobs. Through engagement and pursuit of new agreements, the U.S. can continue to harness new opportunities. However, trading partners worldwide continue to move forward. The United States should seize this opportunity to engage with international institutions, work with our allies, and resume our leadership role in shaping global trade.

**ABOUT WASHINGTON COUNCIL ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE** On behalf of our members – manufacturers, farmers, retailers, service providers, and non-profits, the Washington Council on International Trade advocates for pro-trade policies and investments that benefit Washington's workers and employers. Trade paves the way for Washington-made goods and services to reach foreign markets, provides Washingtonians with products that raise our quality of life, and sustains family-wage jobs in numerous local industries. To learn more, visit us at <http://www.wcit.org>.