



**Statement by Lori Otto Punke, President of the Washington Council on International Trade on Senate Confirmation Process**

**SEATTLE, Washington. February 3, 2021** – As the U. S. Senate continues its review of nominees for positions in the Biden Administration, we call for the swift consideration of Katherine Tai for the United States Trade Representative. With 40 percent of all Washington state jobs tied to international commerce, few issues are as important to the region as international trade.

Ms. Tai's confirmation hearing before the Senate Finance Committee will highlight the critical issues that will define the United States' approach to international trade for the next four years. Particularly important to the Northwest region will be aggressively pursuing greater market access for our products and services, bringing new approaches to our relationship with China, and moving away from tariff-first strategies that have been particularly harmful to Washington state farmers, ranchers, workers, and port employees.

As an engine for economic growth and creator of new jobs, trade will play a critical role in our post-pandemic recovery. Given the challenges our businesses, workers and communities face, we believe this critical process should happen sooner rather than later.

**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>.