



Katherine Tai Nomination Hearing to be USTR: Addressing the Concerns of Washington State

Seattle, Washington. February 24, 2021 -- On Thursday, February 25, the United States Senate Finance Committee will hold a hearing to consider the nomination of Katherine Tai to be United States Trade Representative (USTR). With 40 percent of Washington state jobs tied to international commerce, trade is a critical issue for the regional economy. The Washington Council on International Trade (WCIT) urges Senate Committee members to ask questions that will shed light on the following trade issues and concerns that are a priority for the Northwest region.

Addressing Trade and the Pandemic: Washington is the most trade reliant state in the nation. As the impacts of the coronavirus continue to hit the economy, it is critical to expand international trade and investment opportunities, promote market access for goods and services abroad and eliminate barriers that impede the competitiveness of trade active Washingtonians.

- Question: The Covid-19 response has naturally changed the nature of supply chains. How will the new Administration balance the attention on domestic production with the need to source, produce and distribute supplies and materials that come from international markets?

Advancing Trade Priorities with China: As Washington state's top trading partner, prior to the trade war, China accounted for approximately 20% of all Washington State exports. Tariffs and retaliation in the ongoing dispute have caused Washington diverse exports (applies, cherries, wheat) to decline significantly.

- Question: The US relationship with China is increasingly complex. How will the interests of Washington state workers, businesses and farmers be represented as the US considers a new approach to this bilateral relationship?

Strengthening Washington's Ports and Our Freight Mobility Infrastructure: Washington state has more public ports than any other state and in 2015, activities at Washington's public ports supported 71,250 direct jobs. Our ports also play a critical role in the national economy as nearly 60 percent of imported goods coming through the Northwest Seaport Alliance are bound for destinations outside the Pacific Northwest.

- Question: As the new Administration and Congress consider a broad infrastructure plan, how can you best advocate for investments in port-related infrastructure and freight mobility investments that make our corridors efficient and reliable?

Expanding Digital Trade Opportunities: Washington state's digital commerce exports totaled almost \$2.9 billion between 2014 and 2018 helping support the nearly 250,000 jobs in the information, communications and technology (ICT) sector and businesses throughout the state.

- Question: How does the Administration plan to modernize our trade agreements to harness the opportunities of the digital era?

Pursue Free Trade Agreements with the UK, EU and Japan: Washington state's top ten export markets include the United Kingdom, Japan and Germany. Getting these trade relationships right is critical to our region.

- Question: What priority will the new Administration place on pursuing new free trade agreements with the UK, Japan and the European Union in the next two years?

Avoiding Trade Wars and Tariffs: With the increased use of tariffs as a weapon in international commerce, the climate over the past four years is both unstable and unpredictable, presenting challenges and harm to Washington, which is perhaps the most trade-reliant state in the country.

- Question: Can you tell us more about the Administration's timeline to review Section 232 and Section 301 tariffs?

Supporting International Institutions: The selection of Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala as the new director-general of the World Trade Organization provides an important opportunity to jumpstart discussions, decisions, and actions that make the WTO more effective in helping the modern trading world define and enforce the rules of the road.

- Question: How will United States engage with the WTO going forward and what reforms would you like to see the WTO make to modernize the institution and improve the enforcement of trade rules?

For more information on these issues, please see the WCIT Policy Agenda. <https://wcit.org/policies/>

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