



STATEMENT BY LORI OTTO PUNKE, PRESIDENT OF THE WASHINGTON COUNCIL ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE ON CONGRESSIONAL CONCERNS OVER DIGITAL TRADE BARRIERS

SEATTLE, WA – April 2, 2021 – We share [concerns raised this week](#) by the Congressional Digital Trade Caucus that call attention to policies presently being considered by our trade partners that “unfairly target American firms and threaten U.S. competitiveness.” The COVID-19 pandemic has established the indispensability of digital trade to our economic stability and future growth. That is especially true in the state of Washington where digital commerce exports totaled nearly \$3 billion between 2014 and 2018, helping support the nearly 250,000 jobs in the information, communications and technology (ICT) sector as well as businesses throughout the state. The digital economy is reshaping how Washington State companies connect across borders, creating new ways for businesses of all sizes to reach new markets and customers through trade.

Measures in Europe and Asia including discriminatory digital services taxes and regulations and restrictions on data flows are tantamount to digital age trade blockers that harm American workers and threaten American jobs. The Biden Administration has a great opportunity to help shape our digital future by pushing back on these protectionist measures and engaging in multilateral discussions with our trading partners and through the World Trade Organization on trade provisions that will provide clarity and guidance to governments and businesses.

Digital trade will continue to define the way we conduct international commerce for years to come. For Washington State businesses to reap the full benefits of e-commerce, trade policies and agreements need to be updated to reflect today’s trade environment.

For more information, read the WCIT research report [Washington State Digital Trade: Barriers and Opportunities](#)

The Congressional Digital Trade Caucus Letter can be found here:
<https://www.politico.com/f/?id=00000178-7a5b-d59d-a7f9-7b7f95160000>

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>.