



Statement from WCIT President Lori Otto Punke on Global Trade and Tariffs

Seattle, WA, February 10, 2022 – As the most trade-reliant state in the country with approximately 40% of all jobs tied to international commerce, Washington state has been impacted by a double-hit of pandemic-related challenges and harmful tariffs. In recent years, international trade has been defined more by conflict than by consensus. Tariffs and trade barriers are increasingly being used not only in trade disputes, but now also in addressing broader political and security issues. This alarming trend has fostered instability and uncertainty presenting challenges to Washington state businesses and direct harm to consumers, farmers and workers.

Amidst this challenging environment, we see some signs of hope and optimism. The US and EU this week overcame a 10-year disagreement on food standards and have agreed to resume shellfish trade including oysters, clams, mussels and scallops. While supply chain issues will be an ongoing concern, flexible projects like “pop-up ports” and better communications between transportation and manufacturing sectors have helped alleviate logjams in the system. US and European officials are also taking steps to close in on a comprehensive agreement that should ease tariffs on steel and aluminum.

While there remain many issues of concern, these recent developments are small but positive steps. We need to continue moving away from a tariff-first strategy and toward global engagement and the repeal of trade measures like tariffs that contribute to inflationary pressures and higher costs for Washingtonians.

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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>