

CalChamber President, Chinese Vice Minister Cite Importance of Fostering Strong Ties Between California and China

Fostering business and cultural relationships between the California business community and China was the focus when Chinese Vice Minister of Commerce Wang Chao and his delegation gathered at the California Chamber of Commerce International Luncheon Forum on July 23.

“California and China have a great trading relationship already,” said Allan Zaremborg, CalChamber president and CEO. “China is our third largest trading partner and everything we can do to foster that relationship, make it better, improve the quality of life and the economy for both Californians and people from China would be to everybody’s benefit.”

The vice minister was accompanied by a Chinese government delegation including He Ning of the Chinese Embassy in Washington, D.C., and Ambassador Gao Zhansheng, Chinese Consul General in San Francisco. Also among the 50 luncheon attendees were California government representatives, including Assembly Members Fiona Ma (D-San Francisco) and Bill Berryhill (R-Ceres), and representatives of CalChamber member companies doing business in China.

Trade Relations with China

China has been one of the world’s fastest-growing economies over the last several years, and its efforts to reform and modernize have helped transform China into a large trading economy. China’s total trade exceeded \$3 trillion in 2011, making it the second largest trading nation and the country with the second largest economy in the world. This translates into enormous opportunities for U.S./California exporters.

Vice Minister Wang said his office has been working very hard over the last several years to strengthen the cooperation between China and California.

“California is the gateway to China. It has the strategic location; it has the enthusiasm and dedication to working with China,” he said.

U.S.-China trade has risen rapidly over the last several decades. Total trade between the two nations has increased



Photo by Megan Wood

Chinese Vice Minister of Commerce Wang Chao (left) and CalChamber President and CEO Allan Zaremborg chat following the International Luncheon Forum on July 23.

from \$4.8 billion in 1980 to slightly more than \$503 billion in 2011. U.S. exports to China in 2011 were approximately \$103.9 billion, a steady increase from previous years. In 2011, China continued as California’s third largest trading partner, with more than \$14.2 billion in exports.

One of the main purposes of Vice Minister Wang’s visit was to follow up on the May visit between California Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. and Vice Governor of the Jiangsu Province Fu Ziyang where they convened the inaugural Joint Economic Committee between California and Jiangsu to discuss increased collaboration, trade and investment between the two regions.

Vice Minister Wang said he hopes that the July 23 CalChamber meeting will help “improve bilateral economic trade relations, enhance our mutual understanding, strengthen our cooperation and find opportunities to work for the benefit for both sides.”

Vice Minister Wang will also be visiting Chicago, New York and Washington, D.C., where he will take a midterm review of the U.S.-China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade

(JCCT). The 22nd session of the JCCT in November 2011 was co-chaired by then-U.S. Secretary of Commerce John Bryson and U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk, along with Chinese Vice Premier Wang Qishan.

Vice Minister Wang

Vice Minister Wang has been serving China’s Ministry of Commerce in many capacities since 2006. Before that, the Vice Minister served in the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Economy Relations and Trade, as well as several of the country’s embassies. His portfolio includes the Department of Foreign Investment Administration, Department of American and Oceanian Affairs, Investment Promotion Agency, and the China Chambers of Commerce.

China Trading Partner Portal

For more information about California-China and U.S.-China trade, check out the Trading Partner Portal in the international section of the CalChamber website at www.calchamber.com/China.

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