

CALIFORNIA CHAMBER of COMMERCE



January 11, 2012

The Honorable Ron Kirk
US Trade Representative
Washington, DC 20005

VIA Electronic Submission

Dear Ambassador Kirk:

RE: Japan's Expression of Interest in the Trans-Pacific Partnership Trade Negotiations

The California Chamber of Commerce supports Japan's participation in the Trans-Pacific (TPP) Trade Agreement negotiations.

The California Chamber of Commerce supports new countries joining TPP with participants complying with current international norms and obligations, and committing to the high standards currently being negotiated for trade and investment, as well as, intellectual property protection and enforcement (building upon the IP Chapter in the US-Korea FTA). Agreements like this would ensure that the United States may continue to gain access to world markets, which will result in an improved economy and additional employment of Americans.

As Japan and the U.S. are one of each other's largest export markets, allies and close partners on major global issues, we feel that Japanese participation in the TPP would only further enhance our bilateral relationship.

Furthermore, Japan is prepared to take an active role alongside the U.S. in the TPP negotiations and they are committed to discussing all topics at the table.

As you may know, the California Chamber of Commerce is a broad-based nonprofit membership organization through which business, industry and agriculture join forces to work toward positive action on key issues that affect California's economic climate.

The organization, established in 1890, is the largest and most broadly based employer representative in California. Our members include over 15,000 firms of all kinds and sizes, representing three million jobs--one quarter of the state's private sector workforce, as well as 450 affiliated local chambers of commerce and 200 trade associations. Through its grassroots action program, the California Chamber reaches out to a statewide network of approximately 430,000 small business owners.

California is one of the ten largest economies in the world with a gross state product of approximately \$1.9 trillion. International related commerce accounts for approximately one-quarter of the state's economy.

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The California Chamber also offers a variety of services to help businesses comply with complex laws and regulations, as well as, compete in the international marketplace.

The California Chamber supports expansion of international trade and investment, fair and equitable market access for California products abroad, and elimination of disincentives that impede the international competitiveness of California business.

The Asia-Pacific region is a key driver of global economic growth, representing nearly 60 percent of global GDP and roughly 50 percent of international trade. Since 1990, Asia-Pacific goods trade has increased by 300 percent, while global investment in the region has increased by over 400 percent. U.S. trade with Asian countries totals nearly \$1 trillion annually.

Even though U.S. exports to Asia continue to rise, the United States is gradually losing market share. Asian countries have negotiated more than 160 trade agreements among themselves, while the United States has signed only three with regional countries (Korea, Singapore and Australia).

Because of our location covering the majority of the west coast of the lower 48, California has much to gain with this Agreement. In 2010, California exported almost \$12 billion to these select countries, roughly 14 percent of the United States' exports.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership Trade Agreement will bring real benefits for US workers and businesses and help maintain America's leadership position in an increasingly competitive global environment. The addition of Japan to the agreement will benefit those of us in California and the United States as a whole, and we thank you for your consideration of this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susanne Stirling". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

(Mrs.) Susanne T. Stirling
Vice President, International Affairs

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