



March 8, 2013

The Honorable Ron Kirk
Ambassador
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20508

Re: Vietnam's Inclusion in the Trans-Pacific Partnership

Dear Ambassador Kirk:

Our 700+ member companies view Vietnam's inclusion in the Trans-Pacific Partnership as extremely important to their businesses, to the bilateral economic relationship and to US-Vietnam relations overall. We are pleased you continue to work on the difficult issues with Vietnam during the TPP negotiating process.

As discussed when you graciously spent time with our members last September in Hanoi, we agree that the TPP is the most promising pathway to promote regional economic integration and to support the creation and retention of US jobs. Vietnam is one of the fastest growing markets for US exports in Asia and our companies and investors cannot afford to pass up opportunities to increase market access and improve our competitiveness here. Vietnam is a dynamic country with a young population, abundant workforce, strategic geographic position, and an optimistic future. It is in our interest to see an economically healthy and internationally engaged Vietnam. In addition, our members feel that as an economic alliance among 11 Asia-Pacific nations, with the possible addition of important economies such as Japan and Korea, the TPP has the potential to transform economic relations not only on a regional scale, but also globally.

Our members range from large multinationals that have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in Vietnam to very small companies that are importing a wide range of products from the United States to sell in Vietnam. American farmers, manufacturers, and service providers recognize the potential of this vibrant and growing market and are pushing to offer their goods, services, and investment capital. We believe that Vietnam's membership in the TPP is a critical precondition to the success of American business in Vietnam. A TPP that includes Vietnam will offer significant opportunities for expanded US-Vietnam trade and investment which will benefit workers, farmers, and consumers in both the United States and Vietnam. It is vital that Vietnam make it across the finish line.

USTR worked hard negotiating previous market-opening agreements with Vietnam, and US companies and investors have benefited from the greater access and liberalization that the BTA and WTO agreements provided. While implementation of these previous agreements has not been without its challenges, Vietnam has undertaken serious efforts to meet its commitments. We note that the United

States has a large trade deficit with Vietnam today, which reflects both the openness of the US economy and the significant barriers still facing US firms wishing to access the Vietnamese market. We are hopeful that a truly “21st Century” TPP will alleviate many non-tariff barriers, will offer stronger enforcement provisions and protections, and will do much to level the playing field between our two countries by requiring Vietnam to undertake extensive reforms to open its market to US manufactured goods, service providers and agricultural products. At the same time, we also expect that market access commitments must reflect two-way trade patterns and priorities.

As your time at the helm of USTR comes to an end, please know that our members are particularly grateful for your leadership in developing the growing trade relationship between the United States and Vietnam. We have no doubt but that this relationship will become one of the linchpins of the overall relationship between the United States and ASEAN and we again ask for your action in ensuring Vietnam’s inclusion in the historic TPP agreement.

Respectfully yours,



Mark Gillin
Chair, Ho Chi Minh Chapter



Steven Winkelman
Chair, Hanoi Chapter