

Dear AmCham Members,

As I approach the completion of my first year since returning to Ho Chi Minh City as Consul General, I would like first to say thank you to all of you - the members of AmCham Vietnam - for warmly welcoming me back to Ho Chi Minh City. The Southern Consular District has always held a spot near and dear to my heart since I first served here from 2002 to 2004. Back then I always knew Ho Chi Minh City had the potential to evolve into someplace special, but I continue to be struck by how far the city, and the country, have come.

The economic and political relationship between the United States and Vietnam has significantly evolved over the last 25 years and it continues to grow in many areas: from the more than \$77 billion of two-way trade; to the USS *Theodore Roosevelt's* recent visit to Danang; to the fact that 96 percent of Vietnamese citizens have a favorable view of the United States. Underpinning all of these impressive achievements is the bilateral trade and investment relationship. Ho Chi Minh City continues to be a main contributor to this aspect of our relationship with more than 65 percent of Vietnam's trade flowing through the Southern Key Economic Zone, a testament to all of your work and the commitment from AmCham Vietnam.

In what was supposed to be a year of celebration, 2020 has presented a set of challenges many could not foresee. COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on communities throughout the world, and Vietnam has done a remarkable job tackling the virus from an economic and public health perspective. Vietnam's impressive cooperation with the United States and countries around the world to combat COVID-19 has further demonstrated the strength of our relationship and the importance of tackling this disease together. Our two governments have worked closely to share best practices since the beginning, and the support from the local business community seeking to donate medical supplies and PPE to the United States is a poignant reminder of how our relationship has evolved and how close our countries have grown. The United States and Vietnam are partners in every sense of the word.

Even with these challenges, I am confident we will continue to share in the successes of our bilateral trade and investment relationship in 2020 in an effort to further solidify an economic partnership that is free, fair, and reciprocal. There is much work to be done, which means there will also be even more opportunities to collaborate. I look forward to supporting your efforts to help you achieve new milestones and to celebrate them together, whether that is in person or virtually. We are in an era that is creating a new normal for us all, and I encourage all of you to be creative in the solutions you seek and the ways we work with one another.

My team and I stand ready to assist you in your business efforts as we aim to shape the future of the U.S.-Vietnam business relationship.

All the best and be well,



Marie C. Damour
Consul General