



District Export Council of Southern California

April 28, 2015

Ref: Support of the *Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015*

Dear Member/Senator,

We, the members of the **District Export Council of Southern California** (DECSC), support the bipartisan ***Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015*** and ask for your support to pass this Congressional legislation in order to move forward the US' trade position. The United States has languished on the sidelines of trade negotiations for far too long - Congressional Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) allows the US' active participation in the shaping of the trade agreements, thereby looking out for our country's interests and values.

There are some 59 District Export Councils (DEC) throughout the country. Each member of each DEC is appointed for a two year term by the Secretary of Commerce to work with the Dept. of Commerce through the donation of time and expertise to assist small and medium-sized businesses in their local communities to establish or increase export sales. Exports are in that part of the U.S. economy which generates economic growth and creates new and higher-paying jobs for our communities. Having the geographically largest breadth, the DECSC reaches from Orange County in the south to Fresno and Bakersfield to the north.

The time for the US to engage trade negotiations is now! The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), representing 40% of the world's economy and 12 participating countries, is a massive trade agreement that is entering the final and most intense phase for which US negotiators need the authority of TPA to assert and leverage American interests. Trade agreements also seem to be taking on a strategic competitive element between China and the U.S., as China presses for additional regional influence. The Association of South-East Asian (ASEAN) nations, including China, South Korea and Japan, appears to be constructing a rival trade agreement to TPP – one with which the US is not fully engaged. Our concern is without TPA to allow the US' full commitment in TPP, we could find ourselves on the sidelines losing considerable influence in this region, and also unable to insert trade-based and transparent rules. Further, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP) is positioned for the final stage of negotiations and it too warrants serious and significant involvement and support by the US.

These two trade agreements with Asia and Europe represent at least 60% of the global economic output. Further, we want the US to engage in opportunities with smaller bilateral



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Free Trade Agreements (FTA) that are increasingly being negotiated between many individual countries. California has benefited from the successes of the recent US-Korea FTA, and longer term from the US-Australia FTA, both resulting in significant and continual export growth. This modernization of TPA is important to the members of DECSC because we represent the small and medium sized businesses which are the **job creators** that follow with our exports, after the Congressionally defined negotiated US trade agreements remove trade barriers and allow our businesses competitive access to new international markets.

We applaud the bipartisan steps that have been thus far achieved and ask for your support of this bill which will benefit businesses and workers in the Southern California region.



Susan Kohn Ross
Chair,
District Export Council of Southern California



Kenneth L. Wengrod
Chairman of the Regulatory & Legislation Committee of the District Export Council of
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