

October 14, 2015

The Honorable Michael Froman
U.S. Trade Representative
Office of the U.S. Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

The undersigned organizations are writing to express strong support for petitions to add travel goods – items like luggage, backpacks, purses, and wallets – to the list of products eligible to be imported duty-free from all Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) beneficiary countries.

The addition of these products will provide important opportunities for U.S. companies to diversify their sourcing, lowering costs and spurring further innovation as the petitions attest. Moreover, these products are considered non-sensitive as Congress agreed to include them in the *Trade Preferences Extension Act of 2015*. Some of the products – such as BlackBerry, smartphone, iPad, and computer cases – did not exist when GSP Program was originally implemented in 1974.

Granting these products GSP eligibility will support the more than 100,000 high-value-added travel goods industry jobs in retail, design, brand management, and distribution here in the United States. GSP status will reduce duty costs, freeing up resources that can be used to increase employment, spur innovation, or promote competitiveness of our member companies.

Duty-free treatment will also translate to lower prices for consumers on such basic, everyday items as purses or children's backpacks. Making such items more affordable will immediately benefit millions of hard working American families.

Adding these products to the GSP will help achieve the statutory goals of the GSP program, which are to promote the advancement of developing countries; promote trade, rather than aid; and promote economic development. Dozens of developing countries stand to benefit. Currently, most travel goods are made in just a handful of countries. Duty-free access will create value-added export opportunities for GSP beneficiary countries, creating jobs, and diversifying their economic growth.

We look forward to working with you and the U.S. International Trade Commission throughout the review process to support consideration and gain approval of petitions seeking to add the Congressionally-authorized travel goods to the GSP program.

Sincerely,

American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA)
American Association of Exporters and Importers (AAEI)
Coalition of New England Companies for Trade
Columbia River Customs Brokers & Forwarders Association
Customs Brokers & International Freight Forwarders of Washington State
Customs Brokers and Forwarders Association of Northern California
Emergency Committee for American Trade (ECAT)
Express Association of America (EAA)
Fashion Accessory Shippers Association (FASA)
Gemini Shippers Association
Los Angeles Customs Brokers and Freight Forwarders Association
National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC)
National Retail Federation (NRF)
Outdoor Industry Association (OIA)
Pacific Coast Council of Customs Brokers and Freight Forwarders Association
PPAI - Promotional Products Association International
Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA)
San Diego Customs Brokers Association
Sports & Fitness Industry Association
Toy Industry Association (TIA)
Travel Goods Association (TGA)
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
U.S. Fashion Industry Association (USFIA)