

CFDA

AJFA
american apparel &
footwear association

20 May 2014

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

Dear Ambassador Froman:

As the fifth round of the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (T-TIP) convenes in Washington this week, we urge you to seek full and immediate elimination of all duties on textiles and textile inputs from the European Union and the United States.

Once completed, this free trade agreement will create a market of 800 million consumers accounting for about 33 percent of the world's trade in goods. The T-TIP will also more closely link two of the regions – the United States and Europe – responsible for the most important fashions in the world today. Strong linkages already exist between New York, and European fashion capitals of Paris, Rome, and London. The executives and designers of our member companies – along with the textiles, designs, trends, and inspiration that drive our industry – routinely crisscross the Atlantic to develop and market fashion in the United States and Europe. Those linkages will grow even stronger if the trade barriers that currently hamper our members are removed.

Elimination of all textile import tariffs from Europe will be a powerful boost for U.S. manufacturing, especially in the New York City garment district, which is already responsible for tens of thousands of apparel jobs. New York based companies already pay about \$30 million a year in U.S. textile tariffs from Europe. That number climbs to more than \$100 million when we include those companies located in parts of the United States. Removal of these duties will significantly reduce costs to U.S. apparel manufacturers, allowing them to hire more sewers and designers, invest in technology and capital improvements, and make U.S. made apparel more affordable.

We note that the President proposed elimination of all tariffs as an end goal to the T-TIP. While we applaud that objective, we believe elimination of these tariffs – which effectively act as a tax on U.S.-made fashion – be ended immediately. Keeping these tariffs in place serves no one – not U.S. manufacturers, not U.S. designers, and not U.S. consumers.

We look forward to working with you to end the USA fashion tax now.

Thank you for your consideration.



Steven Kolb
Chief Executive Officer
The Council of Fashion Designers of America



Stephen Lamar
Executive Vice President
American Apparel & Footwear Association