

January 20, 2015

The Honorable Jeh Johnson
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Re: Executive Order on Trade Facilitation and the International Trade Data System

Dear Secretary Johnson,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations representing the interests of millions of U.S. businesses engaged in international commerce, we submit this letter urging continued commitment and leadership by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to fulfill the Executive Order on Trade Facilitation and deliver an International Trade Data System (ITDS single window) by 2016. As we enter 2015, we urge the Department to keep this project as a top priority.

The final ITDS single window should be commercially meaningful, and show immediate benefits for businesses of all sizes. This comprehensive system should simplify trade for companies by decreasing the cost of competing in the global marketplace and set a new global standard for how a 21st Century supply chain and import/export regimes should function. Streamlining and modernization of compliance burdens and expenses will make U.S. companies more competitive.

A robust, comprehensive, and reliable ITDS will also strengthen the ability of U.S. Customs and Border Protection and partnering government agencies (PGAs) to safe-guard our nation's borders for security, trade enforcement, safety, and enhance the protection of intellectual property rights, while allowing legitimate trade to continue to flow without delay. Modernizing these government processes allows affected agencies to streamline operations and eliminate unnecessary time and costs from inefficient programs and procedures while protecting our borders. To ensure accountability, the appropriate metrics should be established and we recommend the creation of an implementation committee with equal representation from industry and government to move forward with 21st century solutions.

We strongly urge DHS to meet its commitments by delivering a commercially meaningful ITDS by the Executive Order's 2016 deadline. The private sector is ready to work as an equal partner in achieving this goal. This project has gone on for years, but the Executive Order has given it a new and appropriate urgency. ITDS promises to provide enormous benefit to the public and private sectors. We ask that you continue to provide strong leadership in coordination with relevant PGAs to achieve this goal.

Sincerely,

Agriculture Transportation Coalition
Airforwarders Association
American Apparel & Footwear Association
American Association of Exporters and Importers
American Automotive Policy Council
American Petroleum Institute
American Trucking Associations
BACM – Business Alliance for Customs Modernization
Border Commerce and Security Council
Canadian / American Border Trade Alliance
CONNECT – Coalition of New England Companies for Trade
Express Association of America
Fashion Accessories Shippers Association (FASA)
Foreign Trade Association
Fresh Produce Association of the Americas
Global Automakers
NASCO – North American Strategy for Competitiveness
National Association of Foreign-Trade Zones
National Association of Manufacturers
National Customs Brokers & Forwarders Association of America
National Foreign Trade Council
National Industrial Transportation League
National Retail Federation
Pacific Coast Council of Customs Brokers and Freight Forwarders
Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA)
Transportation Intermediaries Association
Travel Goods Association (TGA)
United States Council for International Business
United States Fashion Industry Association (USFIA)
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
World Shipping Council