

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4704

June 14, 2018

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

Over the last several weeks, I have watched with growing concern as your Administration has steered the United States toward an international trade war with our closest allies. From imposing major tariffs on steel and aluminum products from our NATO partners, to threatening to abruptly and unilaterally withdraw from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) without an alternative in place, your Administration has failed to take into account the true economic and national security impact of your actions. These actions affect my home state of Washington perhaps more so than any other state, considering our proximity to Canada and the central role international trade plays in Washington's economy. That is why I have been focused on three goals: keeping the parts of our trade agreements that work and reforming those that don't; creating better deals for both our workers and exporters; and adapting to and capitalizing on the 21st century global economy. After witnessing your troubling and hostile behavior toward our international partners at the G7 summit in Quebec, I'm deeply concerned we do not share these goals. As a result, I write to urge you to reconsider the way in which you engage in trade policy with the most important U.S. trade partners.

As a senator representing Washington state, the chorus of alarm I have heard from my constituents has reached a deafening level. Your trade policy decisions pose a unique threat to Washington state workers, manufacturers, and businesses. Washington state ranks first in the country in exports per capita, and nearly 40 percent of Washington jobs depend on international trade. Indeed, exports alone have been responsible for more than 30 percent of the new jobs created in the state in the last three decades. In the last twenty years our exports have increased to Mexico by 700 percent and to Canada by 200 percent.

Due to Washington state's proximity to Canada, our two economies are deeply integrated. What's more, the people of Washington consider the Canadians our friends, our allies, and our neighbors. Despite your claims to the contrary, the United States runs an overall trade surplus with Canada, which was approximately \$8.4 billion last year, according to your own U.S. Trade Representative.

Accordingly, I was alarmed to see your recent tweets calling commerce with Canada "Fool Trade" and "Stupid Trade." I was especially alarmed when your top trade adviser suggested on cable television that there is a "special place in hell" for Canadian Prime Minister Justin

Trudeau. Like you, Mr. President, I support vigorous enforcement of fair trade laws, but indiscriminate tariffs and a trade war with our allies will endanger thousands of Washington state jobs, jeopardize growth in our state, hinder future business opportunities, and alienate the United States from our partners at a critical time. Irrespective of your trade policy disagreements with our closest allies, it is unfit and unwise for you or any senior official in your Administration to slander the leaders of these nations.

While I agree with you that there is progress to be made in our pursuit to modernize and improve trade with our allies – especially when it comes to agricultural trade and non-trade barriers – overly broad tariffs tend to harm the very people you are seeking to protect: American consumers. The type of wide-ranging tariffs you have placed on imported steel and aluminum, for instance, impact the everyday cost of goods containing steel and aluminum. For my constituents, this will undoubtedly cause price uncertainty on household items ranging from canned goods and beverages to higher-priced materials needed to make automobiles, airplanes, and homes in Washington state.

Beyond the direct impact of tariffs on steel- and aluminum-consuming industries, our trade partners have identified many other sectors of Washington state's economy as natural targets for retaliation. I fear our agricultural, construction, and retail industries could be particularly hard hit. Already, Canada, Mexico, and the European Union have threatened billions of dollars in retaliatory tariffs on Washington state goods like apples, pears, cranberry juice, wood and steel products. Washington's ports, too – which move hundreds of millions of dollars of goods in and out of the country every day – are significantly concerned about the impact of your steel and aluminum tariffs, based on the \$1.8 billion in steel and aluminum imported through our state's ports last year. These tariffs are likely to result in reduced shipments and higher prices for their customers and shippers, and these impacts will only grow as retaliation on American goods affects export volume.

Perhaps more concerning than your reliance on broad tariffs, though, is your claim that these tariffs are needed to protect national security. Not only is this a dubious defense, but it has alienated the United States from our NATO allies and G7 partners with alarming speed. Article I, Section 8 of our Constitution vests Congress with the power to regulate international commerce, and Congress in Section 232 delegated to the presidency the authority to make adjustments to imports when those imports threaten to impair the national security. To date, your Administration has provided wholly unconvincing and highly attenuated explanations about what possible current national security situation could legitimize your actions toward our allies. The Section 232 investigations into imports of steel and aluminum – and now automobiles and auto parts – are nothing short of an abuse of your authority under the Trade Expansion Act of 1962.

There is no question that many U.S. trade agreements can be updated and improved, and I fully support modernization of these pacts, particularly with respect to improving worker and environmental protections. I share your interest in expanding American access to foreign markets and increasing international exports. But trade enforcement, Mr. President, should be focused on countries that are involved in unfair trade practices, such as intellectual property theft, workers' rights abuses, and market-distorting government subsidization. We should seek to build a

coalition of our allies to pressure these bad actors into compliance. What we should not be doing is targeting our closest allies with punitive tariffs, especially in the name of national security.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Patty Murray". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

Patty Murray
United States Senator

cc: The Honorable Wilbur Ross, Secretary, United States Department of Commerce
The Honorable Robert Lighthizer, United States Trade Representative