



**West**

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

April 26, 2018

The Honorable Robert E. Lighthizer  
United States Trade Representative  
600 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20508

RE: Modernization of the North American Free Trade Agreement

Dear Ambassador Lighthizer:

On behalf of The Council of State Governments West (CSG West), we are writing to encourage you to modernize the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) to meet the needs and challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. State lawmakers across our 13 western states know first-hand the importance of trade on their economies, and we share your goal of growing jobs and strengthening communities across America.

Since the implementation of NAFTA, U.S. trade with Canada and Mexico has created the most powerful economic bloc in the world, jumpstarting industry and spurring innovation. Today, trade with Canada and Mexico supports approximately 1.1 million jobs in the American West, and all but one of CSG West's states count either Canada or Mexico among their top three export markets.

NAFTA touches the lives of hard-working Americans across a wide spectrum of our society. It has been particularly integral to Americans that raise and grow our food. In our Western contiguous states, approximately 7.5% of the labor force directly depends on NAFTA for their jobs. Our trade relationship with Mexico and Canada has benefited small- and medium-sized businesses that form the backbone of our country, and the integration of American supply chains that have led to specialization in our industries and communities. An integrated production system in the automotive industry that includes suppliers and plants in Mexico and Canada has led to a shared production model which are not advantages other trading blocs have.

A modernized NAFTA would help meet the needs of ever changing economic and technological realities that our states face while increasing American security and promoting valuable exchanges of ideas and information. As fast-paced technological changes have spurred innovation and high-skilled manufacturing opportunities, among others, we must also accelerate our efforts to ensure that our workforce adapts to these changes so that our workforce has the adequate education, training and expertise to meet these realities.

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Sen. Stuart Adams, UT | *Chair, CSG West*  
Rep. Kimberly Dudik, MT | *Chair-Elect, CSG West*

Sen. Michael Von Flatern, WY | *Vice Chair, CSG West*  
Sen. Sam Hunt, WA | *Immediate Past Chair, CSG West*

Edgar Ruiz | *Director, CSG West*

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As an organization that serves western state legislatures and provides a platform for ongoing North American cooperation, we support robust collaboration among the NAFTA countries that foster regional growth and economic competitiveness. As negotiations continue, the western states appreciate the collaborative spirit of the three nations and support the efforts made to date. Key stakeholders and industries in our region, including farmers, manufacturers, energy workers and innovators, are depending on a successful NAFTA renegotiation.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to continuing to work closely with you and your office to further free and fair trade through a modernized NAFTA.

Sincerely,



Senator J. Stuart Adams  
Utah State Senate  
Chair, CSG West



Representative Kimberly Dudik  
Montana House of Representatives  
Chair-Elect, CSG West



Senator Michael Von Flatern  
Wyoming State Senate  
Vice Chair, CSG West



Senator Sam Hunt  
Washington State Senate  
Immediate Past Chair, CSG West

CC:

Embassy of Canada in the U.S.  
Embassy of Mexico in the U.S.  
Province of Alberta  
Province of British Columbia  
Members of the CSG West Canada Relations Committee  
Members of the CSG West Border Legislative Conference  
Congressional Border Caucus