September 17, 2026

The Honorable Markwayne Mullin
Secretary
United States Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dr. Peter K. Navarro, PhD
Assistant to the President and Senior Counselor for Trade and Manufacturing
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
Washington, DC 20501

Dear Secretary Mullin and Dr. Navarro,

We commend President Trump for his June 3, 2026, Executive Order *Strengthening Customs Enforcement* (E.O. 14411). As representatives of U.S. manufacturers and workers who have long contended with unfair foreign trade, we welcome this Administration's commitment to not only strong trade laws but to the rigorous enforcement of those laws. This is critical to protecting American businesses and workers and to safeguarding lawfully owed customs revenue.

The E.O. will help create a level playing field for businesses that follow the rules by holding all importers to the same standards of transparency and ensuring that bad actors who exploit our trading system are held accountable. We look forward to your continued swift implementation of this order.

Additionally, we applaud the President's directive at Section 8 of the E.O. to develop recommendations for long overdue legislation to further strengthen customs enforcement. While many important steps can be taken administratively, statutory changes are necessary to update and modernize Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) enforcement penalty laws and tools to better address the scale and methods of customs evasion today.

American manufacturers and their workers devote extensive time, resources, and energy to obtain remedies under various trade laws designed to level the playing field in the marketplace, only for offending parties to begin unlawful efforts to evade those trade remedy orders almost immediately after they take effect. Although the *Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015* gave CBP authority to combat such conduct, including *Enforce and Protect Act* (EAPA) investigations, that authority has proven inadequate in the face of determined evasion efforts: CBP may only pursue EAPA investigations against the importer of record, not its affiliates, related persons, or successors. Bad actors have become increasingly adept at forming multiple shell companies with no assets to serve as importers of record, often with the same principals and affiliates, setting up a continuing game of "whack-a-mole" that CBP and the Department of Justice (DOJ) are inadequately equipped to play. And all too often, the American public loses out on the customs revenue it is due.

Accordingly, we urge CBP and the Office of Trade and Manufacturing Policy (OTMP) to include the following bipartisan, bicameral trade enforcement bills in your legislative recommendations.

- The *Fighting Trade Cheats Act* (S. 3808 / H.R. 1284) would give CBP more tools to combat and deter customs fraud. Specifically, the bill enhances monetary penalties for

fraudulent and grossly negligent violations; imposes multi-year prohibitions on importing — up to five years for fraud — that extend to affiliated entities; and adopts new enforcement tools that unlock private resources in addition to those used by CBP, while preserving CBP's authority to intervene in or take over any such litigation. Importantly, the bill is expected to raise revenue, through both increased penalty collections and increased tariff collections on net.

- The *STEEL Act* (H.R. 6446) would empower CBP to initiate investigations upon uncovering evidence of evasion and require importers found guilty of evading proper duties to pay the duties they owe before appealing the determination.
- The *Protecting American Industry and Labor from International Trade Crimes (PAIL) Act* (H.R. 1869) — recently passed by the House of Representatives by voice vote — would complement these efforts by establishing a new task force under the purview of the DOJ's Criminal Division to investigate and prosecute international trade crimes including customs fraud, duty evasion and transshipment.
- The *Leveling the Playing Field 2.0 Act* (H.R. 1548 / S. 691) would modernize U.S. trade laws to ensure that domestic industries are able to pursue and rely on remedies to address new and evolving unfair trade practices such as transshipment, "country hopping" to evade application of AD/CVD orders, and cross-border subsidies. While critical, these reforms would be undermined by evasion and rendered toothless without robust customs enforcement.

This E.O. and supporting legislation are critically needed and together will help ensure the effectiveness of the America First Trade Agenda. The companies and workers we represent deserve a system that holds bad actors accountable — not one that allows them to evade consequences repeatedly. Thank you for your consideration, and we hope to see these customs and trade enforcement bills included in your recommendations to Congress.

Sincerely,

Alliance for American Manufacturing (AAM)
American Foundry Society (AFS)
American Institute of Steel Construction (AISC)
American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI)
American Shrimp Producers Association
American Wire Producers Association (AWPA)
Cambria
Cast Iron Soil Pipe Institute (CISPI)
Charlotte Pipe and Foundry
Cold Finished Steel Bar Institute (CFSBI)
Commercial Metals Corporation
Committee on Pipe and Tube Imports (CPTI)
EnforceNOW
Kitchen Cabinet Manufacturers Association (KCMA)
M&B Metal Products, Inc.
McWane Inc.
Municipal Castings Association (MCA)
Plews & Edelmann
Specialty Steel Industry of North America (SSINA)
Steel Manufactures Association (SMA)
U.S. OCTG Manufacturers Association (USOMA)
Webco Industries