September 23, 2026

The Honorable Jamieson Greer
United States Trade Representative
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20508

RE: Request to Extend Suspension of the Section 301 China-Built Vessel Fees

Dear Ambassador Greer:

On behalf of the undersigned maritime transportation stakeholders—including importers, exporters, retailers, manufacturers, agriculture groups, logistics providers, and other users of the international freight transportation system—we respectfully urge the Office of the United States Trade Representative to extend the current suspension of the Section 301 vessel fees related to China's targeting of the maritime, logistics, and shipbuilding sectors. USTR suspended these fees for one year beginning November 10, 2025, following the agreement with China announced last November, with the suspension currently scheduled to expire on November 9, 2026. We strongly urge the administration to extend the suspension once again during the summit between President Trump and President Xi.

We appreciate USTR's efforts to address longstanding concerns regarding unfair practices affecting the maritime, logistics, and shipbuilding sectors. Strengthening U.S. maritime capacity and resilience is an important national objective. At the same time, imposing new or resumed fees on China-built or China-linked vessels would create immediate and far-reaching consequences for U.S. companies that rely on ocean transportation to move goods into and out of the United States.

U.S. supply chains continue to face significant pressure. Importers, exporters, retailers, manufacturers, and agricultural producers are contending with elevated transportation costs, shifting carrier capacity, equipment availability challenges, port and inland network constraints, and broader uncertainty in global trade lanes. Many businesses are still working through higher costs for ocean freight, trucking, warehousing, insurance, and inventory management. These costs compound quickly and are ultimately borne by U.S. businesses, workers, farmers, and consumers.

Resuming the Section 301 vessel fees at this time would add another cost layer to an already strained transportation system. Because China-built vessels represent a meaningful share of global ocean carrier capacity, the practical effect of the tariffs and fees would not be limited to a narrow set of market participants. Instead, the costs would ripple across shipping networks, affect vessel deployment decisions, and increase uncertainty for businesses that have limited ability to control the ownership, operation, or construction history of the vessels used to transport their goods.

A further delay would benefit both importers and exporters. For importers, it would help avoid new transportation surcharges that increase landed costs, disrupt purchasing decisions, and place additional pressure on prices for consumer goods, inputs, and components. For exporters, including agricultural producers and manufacturers, avoiding new fees would help preserve reliable and cost-effective access to foreign markets, reduce the risk of retaliatory or reciprocal measures, and support the competitiveness of U.S.-origin goods abroad.

In addition, while the suspension has been in place for nearly a year, it has also demonstrated that vessel fees alone are not a strategy for rebuilding the U.S. shipbuilding industry. The underlying challenges that contributed to China's dominance, including limited domestic shipbuilding capacity, workforce constraints, and a lack of competitive alternatives, remain. Extending the suspension would provide additional time for policymakers to pursue durable solutions that strengthen U.S. maritime competitiveness without increasing costs for American businesses, exporters, and consumers. It would also provide USTR additional time to continue negotiations with China, coordinate with allies and partners, and pursue policies that expand U.S. shipbuilding and maritime capabilities without imposing near-term costs on American freight users. A durable solution should strengthen domestic maritime capacity while preserving the reliable, affordable transportation services that U.S. companies need to compete in global markets.

Accordingly, we respectfully request that USTR extend the delay of the Section 301 vessel fees before the current suspension expires. Doing so would provide needed certainty to the maritime transportation system, protect U.S. importers and exporters from avoidable cost increases, and support continued progress toward stronger, more resilient supply chains.

We continue to urge USTR and the administration to evaluate the true needs to support the revitalization of the domestic shipbuilding industry. There continues to need to be a dedicated strategy with sustained investments, leadership and a long-term commitment from both the public and private sectors to revitalize the domestic industry, without the need of a port fee on Chinese-built vessels that were purchased years ago.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with USTR to advance policies that strengthen U.S. maritime competitiveness while supporting the businesses, workers, farmers, and consumers that depend on reliable international transportation.

Sincerely,