



**Computer & Communications  
Industry Association**  
Tech Advocacy Since 1972

July 12, 2017

Dear Senator:

I write on behalf of the Computer & Communications Industry Association (CCIA) to urge you to support your colleagues on a trade matter of critical importance to U.S. exporters. We understand Senators Portman and Shaheen are circulating a letter encouraging Ambassador Lighthizer to seek *de minimis* parity with our trading partners in NAFTA negotiations. Achieving this objective would make it easier for American businesses to export small-value shipments and enable small businesses to reach international customers.

When our trading partners have excessively low *de minimis* thresholds, small online businesses bear the regulatory burden. At the border, even small-value packages face cumbersome taxes and duties. This imposes especially burdensome high transaction costs on small businesses unable to afford legal and accounting experts. As a result, American businesses are unable to export to markets with low thresholds, and get left out of international trade.

Last Congress, I applauded the bipartisan effort to modernize U.S. customs procedures with the passage of the Trade Facilitation and Enforcement Act of 2016 (P.L. 114-125). The law lifted the U.S. *de minimis* threshold at which low-value packages are subject to customs duties, from \$200 to \$800. That law also included important Sense of the Congress language, stating that U.S. trade negotiators should use trade policy fora to negotiate commercially meaningful thresholds with foreign trading partners. Consistent with P.L. 114-125, I today urge members to continue their support for small businesses by seeking *de minimis* parity with our trading partners — starting with Canada and Mexico.

Internet commerce and online retailers have been hugely beneficial for small and medium-sized businesses, allowing them to access worldwide markets more easily and efficiently. When global digital platforms allow small businesses to reach consumers worldwide, everyone wins. Therefore, I urge you to relieve the pressure low thresholds impose on small businesses by calling upon Ambassador Lighthizer in NAFTA negotiations to seek *de minimis* parity with our trading partners.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "E. J. Black". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Edward J. Black  
President & CEO  
CCIA