

# United States Senate

February 27, 2020

The Honorable Robert Lighthizer  
United States Trade Representative  
Office of the United States Trade Representative  
600 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20508

Dear Ambassador Lighthizer:

I am writing to request that the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) remove Section 301 import tariffs on medical products that are necessary for U.S. preparedness efforts regarding the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The World Health Organization and the United States have respectively declared this outbreak a global and domestic public health emergency, and public health officials have warned of a growing threat to American citizens.

To ensure that the United States is prepared to contain and combat the spread of this outbreak, it is crucial that there is a robust supply of critical medical products like gloves, thermometers, protective goggles and clothing, and medical caps. Each of these items is currently subject to tariffs under USTR's Section 301 proceedings through Lists 2, 3, or 4A and the normal exemption process deadline for each of them has passed. Additionally, on February 25, Secretary Azar announced the United States does not possess a sufficient stockpile of certain medical supplies as COVID-19 continues to spread.

As both the medical supply chain concerns and public health demands continue to grow, it is critically important that USTR eliminate these Section 301 tariffs. I wrote a letter to Department of Health and Human Services Secretary and Chairman of the President's Taskforce on Novel Coronavirus, Alex Azar, on January 31, 2020 outlining concerns with the medical supply chain. In that letter, I noted that both the outbreak itself and containment measures, like the unprecedented quarantine in China, could serve as considerable threats to the medical supply chain, especially at a time of increased demand.

We must be prepared for increased medical supply demand in the United States, and to that end, I request that USTR eliminate these harmful tariffs on certain medical products and remove barriers to importation.

Products of particular concern include:

<u>Product</u>	<u>Harmonized Tariff Schedule Code</u>
Nitrile gloves	4015.19.05
Sterile gloves	4015.19.05
Non-contact infrared thermometer	9025.19.80
Protective goggles	9004.90.00
Medical protective clothing	6307.90.60; 6307.90.68; 6307.90.72
Disposable medical cap	6505.00.01; 6505.00.80; 6505.00.90

I request immediate elimination of these Section 301 tariffs and look forward to serving as a collaborative partner in USTR's efforts to address the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Sincerely,



Cory Gardner  
United States Senator