



June 4, 2015

The Honorable Bradley Byrne
U.S. House of Representatives
119 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Byrne:

The Alabama State Port Authority seeks your support in passing the bipartisan Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) 2015 measure pending House action. As you know, the Port of Mobile is among the top U.S. Ports serving American and Alabama manufacturing, mining and agribusiness exports in today's global economy. Expanding trade benefits to U.S. shippers is being addressed with the United States negotiating the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement with 11 other Asia-Pacific nations, including some of the world's fastest growing economies. However, to make growth-driving trade agreements a reality, Congress must first renew TPA.

TPA-2015 legislation is vital because economic growth and job creation at home depend on our ability to sell American goods and services to customers living outside our country. One in four manufacturing jobs depends on exports, and one in three acres on American farms is planted for consumers overseas. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce International Trade Administration, 98% of the 300,000 U.S. companies that export their products are small- and medium-size businesses.

TPA-2015 creates a process for negotiating trade deals that will allow Alabama agribusiness and manufacturers to flourish by reducing high foreign tariffs and other trade barriers. According to both the 2013 U.S. Census and the Bureau of Labor Statistics, chemicals, forest products, primary metals, and machinery manufactured for export from Alabama's first Congressional District alone total \$2.3 billion in value. The value of service exports from the district top \$941 million. Combined, over 2900 direct jobs in the district are supported by exports. Our region's fastest export growth opportunities are in Asia's markets.

Many of Alabama's forest products, grain and poultry, steel and machinery producers are already competing with Brazil and other Latin American nations for market position in Asia and Europe. Many of these products move through the Port of Mobile. With the Panama Canal opening in 2016, Brazil and U.S. producers will gain additional opportunities generated from the new canal's expanded ocean carrier capacity and lower shipping rates. Yet, Brazil's producers will not be hamstrung by trade barriers currently imposed on US producers.

This bill reflects the best ideas in contemporary trade policy and sets priorities for U.S. trade negotiations. Further, the TPA also ensures Congress has the final say on any agreement in the form of an up-or-down vote. For these reasons, we urge your support of the Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) 2015.

James K. Lyons
Director / Chief Executive Officer