

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 18, 2020

The Hon. Lawrence Kudlow
Director, National Economic Council
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Kudlow:

We write to ask that the Administration fulfill one of its most basic responsibilities: to balance and address the needs of our country's economic stakeholders on the issue of duty payment extensions. We cannot afford more waffling and lack of leadership during this time of crisis.

Public reporting indicates that a month ago, the Administration began considering granting 90-day extensions of duty payments.¹ The news was welcomed by U.S. companies, including many small businesses, with duty liabilities that are struggling during this pandemic to meet their economic obligations and keep workers on payrolls. However, with a lack of clarity around the measures being considered by the Administration, other U.S. companies and stakeholder groups expressed their concerns that potential steps to defer duty payments could undermine the ability of domestic manufacturers to stay afloat through this crisis and keep their workers on payrolls.

In the face of potentially conflicting U.S. stakeholder concerns and needs, we were heartened to see the Administration begin balancing the interests of actors across the U.S. national economy. As reported, by the end of March, the Administration's deliberations focused on an appropriate scope for the duty payment extensions that might not satisfy everyone, but would try to address concerns from the different sides.²

Yet at a time when every dollar can make the difference between a company's survival and its workers livelihoods, just three days later, the Administration announced that it had abandoned its efforts because "it was too complicated."³ That is completely unacceptable. Leading isn't about taking the easy way out, picking sides, and reinforcing divisions. It is the Administration's responsibility to do the hard work necessary to address the entirety of U.S. economic interests.

It is time for this Administration to step up to the plate on this issue. With the next monthly duty payments coming due this Tuesday April 21st, we ask that you take action immediately and provide a clear and detailed explanation about what you plan to do.

¹ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-03-24/trump-administration-said-to-weigh-90-day-deferral-of-tariffs>

² <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-03-31/trump-set-to-announce-90-day-deferral-for-some-tariff-payments>

³ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-04-03/kudlow-says-u-s-won-t-defer-tariff-payments-citing-complexity>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron Kind". The letters are cursive and fluid.

Ron Kind
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Suzan K. DelBene". The signature is highly stylized and cursive.

Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lizzie Fletcher". The signature is cursive and somewhat slanted.

Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gregory W. Meeks". The signature is cursive and features a prominent horizontal stroke.

Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress