
Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015

Trade Facilitation

Prepared by the staffs of the Ways and Means Committee and Senate Finance Committee

The Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 includes several provisions that direct the Administration to seek robust commitments on trade facilitation and to remove unduly complicated customs procedures and other barriers to trade.

Directs USTR To Seek Trade Facilitation Agreements: Includes a new provision calling for expanded competitive market opportunities for United States exports and to obtain fairer and more open conditions of trade, including through utilization of global value chains, and through the negotiation of new WTO multilateral and plurilateral trade agreements, such as an agreement on trade facilitation.

Recognizes the Importance of Global Value Chains and Multi-Sectoral Commerce: Several new provisions address the benefits to U.S. firms and workers of participating in global value chains and ensure that trade agreements reflect the increasingly interrelated and multi-sectoral nature of trade and investment activity.

New Capacity Building Section Calls for Focus on Trade Facilitation: New negotiating objective seeks to ensure trading partners' implementation of trade commitments by strengthening their legal regimes and rule of law through capacity building and other appropriate means. The provision directs the heads of relevant Federal agencies to strengthen capacity building efforts, specifically relating to customs and trade facilitation.

Includes New and Expanded Provisions on Services: Directs the reduction or elimination of services trade barriers, including regulatory and other barriers that deny national treatment and market access or unreasonably restrict the establishment or operations of service suppliers. Includes a new call for the negotiation of a plurilateral Trade in Services Agreement with those willing and able to undertake high standard services commitments, as well as to use all other means to expand competitive market opportunities for U.S. services and obtain fairer and more open conditions of trade.

Seeks Improved Regulatory Practices: New and updated provisions aim at improved regulatory practices, regulatory coherence and compatibility, stronger transparency in regulations and standards-development processes, and ensure that government regulatory reimbursement regimes are transparent, provide procedural fairness, and are not discriminatory.

Strengthens Anti-Corruption Provisions: Strengthened negotiating objective seeks high, enforceable standards by trading partners against corruption to ensure that U.S. exporters can compete on a level playing field.

Addresses Impact of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs): A new negotiating objective calls for eliminating trade distortions and unfair competition from SOEs and ensuring that they act based solely on commercial considerations.