



**Please contact your Senators and Representatives and ask them to vote yes on expanded export opportunities for U.S. paper and wood products manufacturers.**

The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives are soon expected to vote on crucial legislation that will better pave the way towards breaking down export barriers and allowing our industry to gain greater access to international customers.

Bipartisan legislation to reauthorize “trade promotion authority” (TPA) is the gateway by which the U.S. finalizes, and Congress votes on, job-creating market-opening free trade agreements (FTAs) with other nations. This bill, known as “TPA 2015,” is supported by President Obama and Congressional Republican Leadership. Without it, the FTAs and preferential benefits they give U.S. exporters won’t happen. But not everyone is convinced and Members of Congress still need to hear from you.

As you know, exports are an important part of our industry’s economic health, accounting for about 15 percent of total sales. In 2014, the industry exported \$31.9 billion worth of paper, wood pulp, and wood products. The industry also benefits greatly from *indirect* exports; that is domestic sales of paper, paperboard, and wood packaging materials that are used to package and transport goods exported by *other* U.S. industries. Our industry is consumer-driven – much of what we make gets used by other companies to package and ship their products. The more American cherries, soda, and household products are sold overseas, the more our industry benefits. And with over 95 percent of the world’s population living outside of the U.S., international trade and trade agreements that remove barriers to trade are critical to a strong consumer-driven manufacturing industry like ours.

Currently, the U.S. is pushing to finalize trade agreements with a group of Asia-Pacific nations, and with the European Union. TPA is needed to successfully conclude these negotiations which will help to increase export opportunities for U.S. paper and wood products manufacturers and our customers. Our major international competitors are rapidly negotiating and concluding barrier-reducing trade agreements that benefit their companies. These preferential agreements could leave U.S. companies out in the cold. **But first, Congress must pass TPA legislation to help shape the negotiating goals pursued by U.S. negotiators in pending and future trade agreements to ensure they will support U.S. economic growth and American jobs.**

**Please ask your Senators and Representatives to vote yes on the bipartisan “TPA 2015” legislation.**