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CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

May 25, 2012

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As your Administration continues working to negotiate a strong and balanced Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement, I urge you to ensure that U.S. tobacco exports are treated fairly in the final agreement.

I have no objection to any country regulating tobacco or any other product for public health reasons, as long as imported and domestic products are treated equally. But such regulation can and must be consistent with fair trade objectives. I am concerned that the Administration's "safe harbor" proposal would violate this standard.

As I understand it, the "safe harbor" proposal would apply an exception to tobacco products within the parameters of the TPP's dispute resolution process. Singling out one product for disparate treatment is unfair in the near term and unwise over the long term. In the near term, it would hinder tobacco companies from gaining redress under the TPP. Over the long term, it would invite enactment of protectionist laws that discriminate against U.S. tobacco and create a precedent for similar exceptions affecting single products.

As long as a given nation imports a particular good, the United States should insist that those goods are subject to consistent rules, regardless of the country of origin. Given our country's adverse balance of trade, it is especially important to reject trade policies that have a negative effect on our own nation's exports.

I urge you to maintain current U.S. trade policy on tobacco and ask that you consult with industry stakeholders about the potential impact of the "safe harbor" proposal on our tobacco exports.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Price".

DAVID PRICE
Member of Congress