



August 14, 2017

The Honorable Rex Tillerson
 Secretary of State
 United States Department of State
 2201 C Street, NW
 Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Tillerson:

On behalf of the undersigned associations, we want to emphasize the importance of continued U.S. engagement in the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Such engagement is a critical component of U.S. efforts to provide effective protection and enforcement of U.S. intellectual property (IP) rights, a core component of the Administration’s 2017 trade policy agenda.

WIPO’s mission supports U.S. strategies to foster an environment that protects and promotes innovation, creates high-paying American jobs and delivers high-value U.S. products and services. Less than a year ago, the Department of Commerce found that IP-intensive industries support 45 million American jobs and contribute \$6.6 trillion to U.S. gross domestic product. Moreover, IP industries are critical to the success of the United States globally, accounting for 52 percent of total U.S. merchandise exports. WIPO’s registration systems are an important tool to enhance market access overseas by reducing the cost and administrative burdens for U.S. innovators seeking to protect patents, designs, and trademarks abroad. In fact, American companies account for over one-quarter of WIPO’s \$756 million budget through their use of WIPO’s registration systems for patents, trademarks and designs.

WIPO plays a central role in setting global intellectual property guidelines, facilitating the registration of American IP rights abroad, and promoting pro-innovation policies around the world. In recent years, U.S. leadership at WIPO has been critical in stopping efforts led by certain foreign governments to weaken IP protection, increase pressure to transfer technology, and lower the cost of accessing cutting-edge U.S. technology and content.

Though U.S. stakeholders are utilizing WIPO's resources to win greater access overseas, there is a very real threat that the United States and its creators and innovators will lose their voice at WIPO by January 1, 2018 due to non-payment of its financial contribution to the organization. We appreciate the critical oversight role the United States and other governments play in the international system, and we support the State Department's ongoing review of WIPO activities. We hope that this review will be completed expeditiously and, if appropriate, that the United States will promptly release its financial contribution to WIPO. Should the U.S. government lose its vote in the organization, other governments, particularly those that are pushing WIPO to take actions that will harm American innovation, IP, and exports, will be more successful in their efforts to benefit their domestic companies at the expense of the U.S. economy, workers and business.

The U.S. government and stakeholders must remain at the table in WIPO as the organization weighs important IP issues affecting the U.S. economy, businesses, and workers. Maintaining and advancing leadership within the United Nations system by U.S. agencies like the Department of State, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, and Office of the United States Trade Representative is critical as WIPO member states set international frameworks and policies in areas such as genetic resources, geographic indications, copyright exceptions and limitations, patentability criteria, and trade secrets.

We appreciate your attention to this important matter and look forward to working with you to maintain and grow U.S. influence in global institutions.

Sincerely,

Association of University Technology Managers
Biotechnology Innovation Organization
Consortium for Common Food Names
Copyright Alliance
CropLife America
Grocery Manufacturers Association
International AntiCounterfeiting Coalition
International Dairy Foods Association
International Intellectual Property Alliance
International Trademark Association
National Association of Broadcasters
National Association of Manufacturers

National Foreign Trade Council
National Milk Producers Federation
North American Meat Institute
Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
U.S. Council for International Business
U.S. Dairy Export Council
Wine Institute