Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 5, 2016

The Honorable Michael Froman
U.S. Trade Representative
600 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20508

Dear Ambassador Froman:

We write to gain information regarding the Administration's policy towards the possibility of Iran's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO). We firmly believe that the United States must oppose Iran's membership in this important international body. In addition to further empowering and enriching Iran's tyrannical regime, Iranian accession to the WTO could seriously complicate our ability to combat Iran's support for terrorism, human rights violations, ballistic missile program, and other illicit activity.

Iran, a WTO observer state, is seeking to accede to the 164-member international body. Following the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the EU, the UK, and Switzerland have formally announced support for Iranian membership to the WTO; Oman, India, and other member nations have expressed a similar sentiment. The U.S. has historically pushed back against Iranian accession to this global body.

WTO rules require Member States to engage in non-discriminatory trade practices with fellow members. America's ability to impose financial or economic sanctions against Iran may be constrained if Iran were to accede to the WTO. The U.S. and other WTO Members should not be forced to defend against potential WTO disputes if we continue to impose sanctions against Iran.

As Iran remains the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism and continues to be a destabilizing force in the Middle East, maintaining our robust sanctions regime is critical. Iran must be held responsible for its actions, and our ability to impose sanctions is vital in deterring Iran from engaging in nefarious activities. We request that you provide answers to the following questions:

1. What is U.S. policy regarding Iranian accession to the WTO? Is the U.S. definitively opposed to Iran becoming a WTO member?
2. We understand that the U.S. rejected prior Iranian requests to join the WTO; what were the grounds and what, if anything, has changed?
3. What activities is USTR undertaking with regard to Iran's efforts to join the WTO? What progress has Iran made and what timeframe is it pursuing for potential accession?
4. As consensus amongst its members is mandatory in determining WTO membership, will the U.S. block Iranian accession to the WTO?

Despite implementation of the JCPOA, Iran's hostile behavior remains unchanged. The U.S. must take all necessary steps to ensure the viability of the sanctions regime against Iran. We look forward to working with the Administration on this issue.

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Sincerely,

PETER J. ROSKAM
Member of Congress

DAVE REICHERT
Member of Congress

JUAN VARGAS
Member of Congress

GRACE MENG
Member of Congress