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June 12, 2017

Mr. Edward Gresser
Chair of the Trade Policy Staff Committee
United States Trade Representative
600 17th St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20508

Re: USTR-2017-0006; Comments on Negotiating Objectives Regarding Modernization of
North American Free Trade Agreement

Dear Mr. Gresser:

Associated Industries of Massachusetts (AIM) and our 4000 member companies strongly support modernization of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA.) NAFTA has been a boon to the Massachusetts economy. Canada is our largest trading partner and Mexico our second-largest trade market; our trade with these countries has increased exponentially since 1994.

After nearly a quarter-century of existence, NAFTA surely needs to be tweaked to reflect new norms of business including the internet, e-commerce and changes in industry sectors, cycles and supply chains. However, we caution that although NAFTA needs to be modernized, it should not be significantly changed.

Hundreds of thousands of jobs in Massachusetts depend on trade, and NAFTA has helped our companies grow and increase employment. AIM's manufacturing businesses produce machinery, components, medical devices, pharmaceuticals, jet engines, circuit boards, bicycles, cranberries, athletic shoes and more. Massachusetts also has a strong services sector. Thousands of our firms depend on global markets for their success. In short, exports keep our state's economy healthy and our job growth strong.

AIM has been supporting manufacturers for more than 100 years. We believe in free trade, increased access to global markets for Massachusetts-made products and services, and the elimination of barriers to trade.

As you proceed with NAFTA modernization, please consider the following priorities: 1) Do no harm, 2) Be timely, 3) Avoid erecting new trade barriers, 4) Keep the agreement trilateral and 5) Make NAFTA better for employers, workers and consumers.

On behalf of our membership, I thank you for prioritizing jobs and manufacturing as you engage in NAFTA re-negotiations with Canada and Mexico.

Sincerely,

Richard C. Lord
President & CEO
Associated Industries of Massachusetts