

MIKE CRAPO, IDAHO, CHAIRMAN

CHUCK GRASSLEY, IOWA
JOHN CORNYN, TEXAS
JOHN THUNE, SOUTH DAKOTA
TIM SCOTT, SOUTH CAROLINA
BILL CASSIDY, LOUISIANA
JAMES LANKFORD, OKLAHOMA
STEVE DAINES, MONTANA
TODD YOUNG, INDIANA
JOHN BARRASSO, WYOMING
RON JOHNSON, WISCONSIN
THOM TILLIS, NORTH CAROLINA
MARSHA BLACKBURN, TENNESSEE
ROGER MARSHALL, KANSAS

RON WYDEN, OREGON
MARIA CANTWELL, WASHINGTON
MICHAEL F. BENNET, COLORADO
MARK R. WARNER, VIRGINIA
SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, RHODE ISLAND
MAGGIE HASSAN, NEW HAMPSHIRE
CATHERINE CORTEZ MASTO, NEVADA
ELIZABETH WARREN, MASSACHUSETTS
BERNARD SANDERS, VERMONT
TINA SMITH, MINNESOTA
BEN RAY LUJÁN, NEW MEXICO
RAPHAEL G. WARNOCK, GEORGIA
PETER WELCH, VERMONT

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6200

GREGG RICHARD, STAFF DIRECTOR
JOSHUA SHEINKMAN, DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

August 18, 2026

The Honorable Howard Lutnick
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Lutnick:

I write to request information regarding the Department of Commerce's ongoing trade proceedings involving Korea Aluminium and a reported \$2 million payment from its parent company, Base Group, to President Trump's holding company.¹ Recent disclosures indicate that as Korea Aluminium has challenged the Department's duties on certain aluminum imports into the United States, its parent company has sought to financially entangle itself with the President's personal business ventures.² As Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee, the information I request in this letter will aid my understanding of duty administration and ensure that the Department's trade remedy proceedings remain apolitical and free from conflicts of interest.

The circumstances surrounding Korea Aluminium's trade dispute and its parent company's financial relationship with the President raise significant concerns.³ On November 27, 2023, the Commerce Department published a final affirmative determination, officially finding that imports of aluminum foil assembled or completed in South Korea using Chinese-origin inputs were circumventing antidumping and countervailing duty orders.⁴ On August 8, 2025, the Department published the preliminary results of an ongoing administrative review, demonstrating that it was actively reviewing and recalculating the specific antidumping duty rates that apply to these covered imports.⁵

¹ Eric Lipton & John Yoon, "Trump Paid \$2 Million by South Korean Company Facing Trade Investigation," *The New York Times*, July 14, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/07/14/us/politics/trump-south-korea-aluminum.html>.

² *The New York Times*, July 14, 2026.

³ *The New York Times*, July 14, 2026.

⁴ 88 FR 82824, <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/11/27/2023-26030/antidumping-and-countervailing-duty-orders-on-certain-aluminum-foil-from-the-peoples-republic-of>.

⁵ 90 FR 38449 <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2025-08-08/pdf/2025-15138.pdf>.

According to public reports, Base Group has spent nearly a decade cultivating a relationship with the Trump family, exclusively selling Trump-branded wine in South Korea and hosting Eric Trump at its Seoul headquarters in February to discuss ways to increase bilateral trade.⁶ President Trump's annual Office of Government Ethics financial disclosure form, released in late June 2026, revealed that Base Group, the lead investor and parent company of Korea Aluminium, made a \$2 million payment last year to the President's holding company.⁷ The public disclosure cryptically described the payment as a "nonrefundable development fee" related to a "letter of intent."⁸ While representatives for the company and the Trump family have claimed the transaction pertains to an unannounced golf course project, the timing and nature of this payment warrant scrutiny.⁹

Congress, which has constitutional authority "to lay and collect...[d]uties" and "to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations," has a strong interest in oversight of duty administration.¹⁰ The American public and U.S. businesses rely on the government to pursue trade policy in the public interest, rather than in the President's personal financial interest. To ensure the integrity of the Department's ongoing proceedings, please provide answers to the following questions and requests for information no later than September 1, 2026:

1. Please provide all communications between the Department of Commerce and any White House official or advisor regarding Korea Aluminium, Base Group, Camus E&C, or the ongoing review of duties on South Korean aluminum imports.
2. Was Secretary Lutnick or any other Commerce Department official made aware of the \$2 million payment from Base Group to the President's holding company prior to the public release of the President's OGE financial disclosure forms?
3. Please provide a detailed timeline and all related documents for any meetings, discussions, or correspondence between Commerce Department officials and representatives, lobbyists, or executives of Korea Aluminium, Camus E&C, or Base Group since January 1, 2025.
4. Please provide all internal memoranda, ethics guidance, or directives detailing how the Department safeguards its trade remedy proceedings from political interference, particularly in instances where the President maintains active financial ties to an entity under investigation.

If you have any questions, you may contact my Senate Finance Committee oversight staff at 202-224-4515. Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

⁶ *The New York Times*, July 14, 2026.

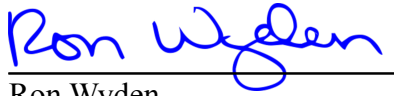
⁷ OGE Form 278e at 861, Donald J. Trump, 2026, [https://extapps2.oge.gov/201/Presiden.nsf/PAS+Index/69AEAA9D7455ACD585258E27002DDEE1/\\$FILE/Donald-J-Trump-2026-278ANNUAL.pdf](https://extapps2.oge.gov/201/Presiden.nsf/PAS+Index/69AEAA9D7455ACD585258E27002DDEE1/$FILE/Donald-J-Trump-2026-278ANNUAL.pdf).

⁸ OGE Form 278e; *The New York Times*, July 14, 2026.

⁹ *The New York Times*, July 14, 2026.

¹⁰ U.S. Const. art. I, § 8, cl. 1, 3.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron Wyden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ron" and last name "Wyden" clearly distinguishable. It is positioned above a horizontal line.

Ron Wyden
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Committee
on Finance