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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6200

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October 3, 2025

The Honorable Howard Lutnick
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Lutnick:

I write to request information on your preparation for the recent global suspension of de minimis importation, which allowed goods valued at \$800 or less to enter the United States duty-free and under streamlined procedures. As Commerce Secretary, you were responsible for advising the President on the timing and implementation of this policy change, the abruptness of which has resulted in mass disruptions in international shipments, confusion and increased costs for American consumers and small businesses, and the total suspension of postal shipments to the United States from dozens of countries, resulting in an 81 percent reduction in postal traffic to the United States on the day it was implemented.¹ I have serious concerns about your judgment and seek additional information regarding your role in the decision to abruptly end de minimis without proper systems in place to handle the change.

The President's July 30 Executive Order 14324, which suspended de minimis importation on a global basis as of August 29, 2025, states: "The Secretary [of Commerce] has notified me that adequate systems are now in place to fully and expeditiously process and collect duties for articles otherwise eligible for duty-free de minimis treatment on a global basis..."² However, it is clear that the systems in place on August 29 were far from adequate. On the contrary: the Trump Administration's action has caused major disruptions and new costs for U.S. consumers and businesses alike.

The Trump Administration's hasty action has severely disrupted international postal shipments to the United States. Foreign postal services across Europe and Asia have suspended or

¹ Universal Postal Union, *UPU launches solution to move mail as postal flows to US reach near standstill* (September 5, 2025); <https://www.upu.int/en/press-release/2025/press-release-upu-launches-solution-to-move-mail-as-postal-flows-to-us-reach-near-standstill>.

² Executive Order 14324 of July 30, 2025 (Suspending Duty-Free De Minimis Treatment for All Countries).

significantly limited their shipments to the United States due to the new regulatory requirements.³ These services cited unclear U.S. guidelines and insufficient time to adjust their operations to the new customs procedures.⁴ This widespread disruption disproportionately affects small businesses, which often rely on postal shipments as the least costly method of international shipping.⁵

Indeed, small businesses across the United States have been hit hard by the abrupt suspension of the *de minimis* exemption—particularly in light of President Trump’s massive global tariffs. Many small and micro businesses, including artisans and many women-owned e-commerce operations, relied on this exemption to import specialized inputs from abroad.⁶ Trump’s tariffs have significantly increased those input costs, making it harder for these businesses to offer affordable products to customers. Moreover, small businesses now face the added burden of complex customs paperwork. Small businesses, which often do not have the resources to absorb sudden increases in costs or administrative complexity, are particularly vulnerable to the new financial and logistical challenges.

American consumers have also been blindsided by surprise tariff bills as a result of the Administration’s abrupt change in policy. Previously, U.S. consumers could buy items from abroad valued up to \$800 without facing any additional duties. But without the *de minimis* exemption, U.S. consumers have faced unexpected fees assessed only after their international purchase has been delivered. In some cases, these tariff bills can be substantial, even amounting to twice the cost of the item itself.⁷

In light of the foregoing, I ask that you respond to the following questions:

1. Please provide the analysis underlying your conclusion that adequate systems were in place to “fully and expeditiously process and collect duties for articles otherwise eligible for duty-free *de minimis* treatment on a global basis” as of the July 30, 2025 Executive Order.
2. Please provide a list of the offices and/or bureaus within the Department of Commerce that contributed to your analysis.

³ Reuters, *Global postal services suspend some U.S. shipments as de minimis exemption ends* (August 29, 2025); <https://www.reuters.com/business/global-postal-services-suspend-some-us-shipments-de-minimis-exemption-ends-2025-08-29>.

⁴ Supply Chain Dive, *US-bound shipments restricted by postal carriers in Europe, Asia* (August 25, 2025); <https://www.supplychaindive.com/news/us-bound-postal-shipments-restricted-by-suspensions-in-europe-asia/758521>.

⁵ Reuters, *Global postal services suspend some U.S. shipments as de minimis exemption ends* (August 29, 2025); <https://www.reuters.com/business/global-postal-services-suspend-some-us-shipments-de-minimis-exemption-ends-2025-08-29>.

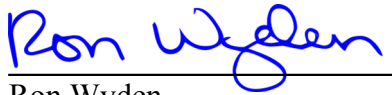
⁶ Salon, *Why your favorite Etsy treasures could soon cost more — or go away entirely* (September 14, 2025); https://www.salon.com/2025/09/14/why-your-favorite-etsy-treasures-could-soon-cost-more-or-go-away-entirely_partner/.

⁷ NBC News, *New tariff rules bring 'maximum chaos' as surprise charges hit consumers* (September 8, 2025); <https://www.nbcnews.com/business/consumer/surprise-tariff-bills-de-minimis-rcna229375>.

3. Did you or your staff consult with Customs and Border Protection, the U.S. Postal Service, or any other departments and/or agencies regarding the global suspension of de minimis in advance of your notification? If so, please list them.
4. Did you or your staff consult with the Universal Postal Union regarding the global suspension of de minimis in advance of your notification?
5. Did you or your staff engage with any foreign governments regarding the global suspension of de minimis in advance of your notification? If so, please list them.

Please respond to these questions as soon as possible, but no later than October 31, 2025. Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Committee
on Finance

CC: The Honorable Rodney Scott, Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection