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## UPDATE: California's DENIM Manufacturing Industry

### REP. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD TO OBAMA ADMINISTRATION: PROTECT CALIFORNIA APPAREL MANUFACTURERS; FIGHT UNFAIR EUROPEAN UNION DUTIES

Washington, DC - Today, Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard led three of her colleagues from Los Angeles in sending a letter to the Acting U.S. Trade Representative, urging her to take action in response to the imposition of a steep increase in European Union tariffs on American-made women's jeans. These unfair duties will severely impact premium denim brands that employ thousands of California workers. The letter strongly encourages the Administration to make this issue a priority in upcoming trade negotiations with the EU.

**"Consumers around the world associate blue jeans with the United States," said Rep. Roybal-Allard. "Unfortunately, if the EU's excessive duties remain in place, it's likely that in the future, fewer denim brands will carry the label 'Made in America.' That's why fair market access for American apparel manufacturers should be a priority when trade talks begin with the European Union. I call on the Administration to protect California manufacturing jobs by fighting for a level playing field for our state's iconic denim brands at these negotiations."**

The full text of the letter to Acting U.S. Trade Representative, Ambassador Miriam Sapiro is below:

Ambassador Miriam Sapiro  
Acting United States Trade Representative  
Office of the United States Trade Representative  
600 17th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Ambassador Sapiro:

We appreciate and strongly support the Administration's efforts to bolster American manufacturing and boost American exports to markets around the world. Recognizing your interest in protecting and growing this critical sector of our economy, we write to express our serious concerns regarding the European Union's (EU) recent decision to impose new tariffs on women's jeans. These increased duties will unfairly disadvantage American denim makers, including popular denim brands based in California, and could lead to the loss of valuable manufacturing jobs. For that reason, we respectfully request

that you work to end these tariffs and to ensure American denim manufacturers fair access to the European market in all future trade negotiations with the EU.

The first blue jeans were made in California and apparel manufacturing plays an important role in our state's economy. In recent years, Californian premium denim brands have grown in popularity, both domestically and internationally, and have successfully expanded to new markets in Europe and Asia. Collectively, these brands support thousands of jobs and hundreds of small businesses from sewing contractors to cutting services to dye and wash facilities to textile suppliers. California denim producers have demonstrated that American apparel manufacturers, using American-made materials, can thrive in the intensely competitive global marketplace.

Unfortunately, this California success story has been imperiled by the imposition of new EU tariffs on American women's jeans. On May 1st, the duties assessed by the EU on this category of products increased dramatically, jumping from 12 to 38 percent. The resulting price increase will push these jeans out of the reach of many European consumers, hurting American denim producers and putting California manufacturing jobs at risk. We fear that unless the new EU duties are rescinded, these businesses may be forced to consider relocating overseas. For these reasons, we strongly encourage you to seek a reduction in these duties and request that you make fair market access for American-made denim and other apparel products a priority in your upcoming trade negotiations with the EU.

We share President Obama's belief that given a level playing field, American businesses and workers can out compete anyone. Unfortunately, the EU's actions have denied American denim makers a fair opportunity to succeed in the European market. Jeans are a quintessentially American product and we strongly believe they should continue be made here in America. We look forward to working with you to address the competitive barriers our denim producers face and to advance our shared goal of revitalizing American manufacturing.

Sincerely,

Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard  
Rep. Xavier Becerra  
Rep. Linda Sanchez  
Rep. Grace Napolitano

cc: Irving A. Williamson, Chairman, U.S. International Trade Commission



California Fashion Association  
444 South Flower Street  
37th Floor  
Los Angeles, California 90071

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