



August 30, 2018

The Honorable Michael R. Pompeo
 Secretary of State
 U.S. Department of State
 2201 C Street Northwest
 Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

The undersigned associations wish to emphasize the need for the United States to maintain a strong voice in favor of U.S. interests through continued leadership and robust engagement in the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Such engagement is a critical component of U.S. efforts to promote and protect American innovation and exports around the world.

Given the critical importance of innovation to the U.S. economy – IP-intensive industries support 45 million American jobs and contribute \$6.6 trillion per year to the U.S. gross domestic product – WIPO is vital to U.S. economic and foreign policy interests. In addition, WIPO policies affect the exports of many sectors of our economy, including farmers and manufacturers.

The U.S. role in WIPO and its key committees is critical and will become more so as WIPO elects its next Director General. The United States currently sits on the committee that will nominate candidates for the position. Given that the slate of global candidates may include those from countries that may not share the United States’ support for innovation and for a level playing field, the full force of U.S. influence will be necessary to elevate the best candidates. The United States cannot afford to vacate the field.

WIPO plays a central role in setting global intellectual property guidelines, facilitating the overseas registration of American IP rights and promoting pro-innovation policies around the world. WIPO's registration systems reduce the cost and administrative burdens for U.S. innovators seeking to protect patents, designs, and trademarks abroad. American companies account for over one-quarter of WIPO's \$756 million budget through their use of the registration systems for patents, trademarks and designs.

WIPO has also been an important forum for strong U.S. leadership on innovation, advancing a strong pro-innovation agenda to benefit American businesses, creators, farmers and workers and pushing back on troublesome, non-transparent initiatives that undermine critical American innovation. In recent years, U.S. leadership at WIPO has been critical in pushing back on efforts led by other foreign governments to weaken IP protection, increase pressure to transfer technology, lower the cost of accessing cutting-edge U.S. technology and content, and promote IP approaches that limit market access opportunities for American-made products relying on common food names.

Though U.S. stakeholders utilize WIPO's resources to win greater access overseas, there is a very real threat that American creators and innovators will lose their voice at WIPO if the U.S. does not pay its full financial contribution to the organization. We appreciate the critical oversight role the United States and other governments play in the international system, and we support the State Department's ongoing review of WIPO activities and push to address the specific concerns laid out in past appropriations bills. We hope that the Department will complete this review expeditiously and that the United States will promptly release its full financial contribution to WIPO.

We thank you for your attention to this important matter and look forward to working with you to ensure strong global U.S. leadership to support American foreign policy and economic interests.

Sincerely,

AUTM

Biotechnology Innovation Organization

Business Council for International Understanding

Consortium for Common Food Names

Copyright Alliance

Grocery Manufacturers Association

International Anti-Counterfeiting Coalition

International Dairy Foods Association

International Intellectual Property Alliance

National Association of Manufacturers

National Foreign Trade Council

National Milk Producers Federation

North American Meat Institute

Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America

Software and Information Industry Association

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

U.S. Council for International Business

U.S. Dairy Export Council

Wine Institute