

Wice, Samuel L. EOP/OMB

From: Ashley Taranto <ashley@rpswineimports.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 9, 2020 3:50 PM
To: MBX USTR 301aircraft
Subject: [EXTERNAL] USTR Large Civil Aircraft Dispute portal

To Whom It May Concern

I am writing as an importer and distributor of imported wines because I stand in stark opposition to the proposed changes to the USTR Large Civil Aircraft portal.

I am concerned with the multiple rounds of tariffs that are being imposed and considered on wine from the European Union (“EU”). I strongly urge you not to punish wine consumers, or hardworking wine retailers, importer/distributors, sommeliers, and other wine sellers for problems they didn’t cause, and instead consider those companies responsible for igniting these issues.

Because of these import tariffs, prices for wine will increase dramatically and make my business difficult if not impossible. Margins on wine are already extremely small, and the sale of wine is highly regulated with nearly every state imposing a three-tier distribution system with markups occurring at each tier of distribution. Thus, a 25-percent tariff on wine imports will likely result in a 50-percent increase and a 100-percent tariff on wine imports will likely result in a 150-percent increase in prices for consumers, driving them to purchase wine from other markets and severely impacting my business - which, subsequently, has already been severely impacted this year due to a global pandemic.

There is no substitute for imports of wine from the EU. Wines from the EU are different from domestic wines and wines from other countries as a matter of consumer taste. EU regions boast unique micro-climates, terroirs and indigenous grape varietals that simply cannot be replicated elsewhere.

Wine consumers and American wine-related small businesses such as retailers, importers and restaurants—many of which are family or individually owned—should not suffer because of a dispute involving Boeing and Airbus or France’s digital services tax. Small European producers looking to break into the American market should not be punished. Retaliatory tariffs on these matters should target Airbus and their suppliers who benefitted from the subsidies, and French digital services companies.

Professionals from every sector of the wine industry object to the proposed tariffs, which not only threaten the import and enjoyment of wine, but also impact all levels of business. Small businesses will not expand, or worse, may close. People will be out of jobs. Already, jobs have been withdrawn from the market in response to the global pandemic. With these ridiculous tariffs, you will kill this segment of the economy.

I kindly ask for your reconsideration of this issue.

Thank you for your consideration and respectfully submitted.

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