COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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GOVERNOR

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September 2, 2026

Via Electronic Mail

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Re: *Kentucky Urges You to Rescind Your Harmful Tariffs and Trade Policies*

Dear Mr. President,

I urge you to end your harmful trade policies. As Kentucky's Governor, I am committed to doing everything I possibly can to keep prices down for our families. Your tariff and trade policies raise consumer prices and effectively act like a tax hike on American families. Today, your tariff policies are fueling a cost-of-living crisis for our people, harming many of Kentucky's signature industries and the employees who depend on those jobs for their livelihoods. In 2024, you said the tariffs would lower costs and bring jobs home. The opposite has happened.

There is no dispute: tariffs have sent prices soaring and made inflation worse. Studies show American families could pay more than $330 billion in tariff costs in 2026, an average of more than $2,500 per family. Our people feel the pain every time they fill up their gas tank or buy groceries. In 2025, families paid $310 more on average for groceries. In May 2026, grocery prices saw the biggest price spike in years. The national average gas price is over $4 per gallon. This means drivers will pay on average $575 more for gas in 2026 than they did in 2025. Your tariffs are also making it more difficult for families to keep the lights on. In 2025, the average electric bill increased by $110. In Kentucky alone, H.R. 1 is estimated to raise annual household power bills by an additional $200 in 2030 and $630 in 2035.

Higher gas prices, grocery costs, and utility bills mean American families have had to cut back in other places: rent, childcare, car payments, or that family vacation they may have been saving to take. With this contracted economy, unemployment has risen and job growth has stalled. This is not routine inflation; it is a direct result of your policies.

Beyond the checkout line, tariffs are damaging Kentucky's signature industries. By inviting retaliatory penalties, your Administration has placed a target on bourbon. The distillers operating in our state have lost out on global markets and thousands of livelihoods have been put at risk. At their lowest point, spirits exports to Canada plummeted by 85%, exports to the European Union dropped by 12%, exports to the United Kingdom fell by nearly 30%, and those to Japan decreased by 23%. As a result, distillers operating in the Commonwealth are sitting on a record backlog of 16 million barrels of Kentucky bourbon, forcing production slowdowns, and layoffs.

Tariffs have also made it harder for American coal producers to compete and have artificially inflated the costs of essential mining equipment and infrastructure. Crucially, tariffs and trade disputes have stifled global demand for American metallurgical coal, with uncertainty over tariffs keeping demand low as potential buyers delay projects. In February 2025, Alliance Resource Partners, the fourth-largest coal producer in the U.S., shared in its annual report that "these tariffs, along with potential retaliatory measures, could reduce economic activity, increase costs, decrease demand, and alter purchasing behaviors for thermal and metallurgical coal."

Finally, your economic policies are also harming cattle farmers in Kentucky. My state is the largest beef cattle producing state east of the Mississippi River. Your plan to import significantly more beef from outside the United States could spell disaster for Kentucky's beef cattle farmers, who have already gone through so much. The Kentucky Farm Bureau has gone on the record opposing these measures, stating "greater reliance on foreign beef could hurt American farmers and create long-term consequences for consumers." Allan Bryant, President of the Kentucky Cattleman's Association, recently criticized your plan to import foreign beef to lower retail prices ahead of the midterm elections. He said your plan has already "wreaked havoc" on the industry.

In Kentucky, we have fought hard to build a flourishing economy, creating over 70,000 jobs and hitting record-low unemployment. Your trade war threatens that progress. When the price of cars, appliances, and clothing jumps by as much as 40%, it is the American consumer, not the foreign exporter, who pays the price for your failed strategy. It's time to end this tariff policy.

Respectfully,

Andy Beshear

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Governor

Cc: Kentucky Congressional Delegation