

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-0552

December 8, 2017

Ambassador Robert Lighthizer  
Office of the United States Trade Representative  
600 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20508

Dear Ambassador Lighthizer,

I write to you today to emphasize my support for strong and enforceable environmental provisions in any updates to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and to urge you to make the inclusion of such provisions a priority in ongoing negotiations with Canada and Mexico.

As the previous Administration negotiated and Congress debated the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), one area of agreement was that the environmental provisions contained in NAFTA need to be updated, strengthened, and made enforceable through dispute resolution. In San Diego this is particularly evident in light of the fact that, despite commitments from the Mexican government to work with the United States to improve transboundary environmental health, sewage discharge from the Mexican side of the border continues to harm San Diego communities and threaten both environmental and public health. In addition, with reports of Border Agents becoming sick after sewage pollution exposure and concerns of sewage in our oceans impeding the training of our Navy SEALs, there are real national security implications as a direct result of Mexico side sewage discharges. As part of the San Diego Congressional delegation, I have engaged closely with the relevant U.S. agencies that have jurisdiction over transboundary environmental health, however, we are limited in what recourse we can take because of the lack of enforceable environmental agreements with Mexico. The result has been public outrage, unsanitary water conditions, pollution, and beach closures in San Diego County.

The continued lack of enforceable environmental standards in our trade agreements is no longer tenable. Recognizing that environmental hazards do not stop at transnational borders, it is of the utmost importance that any renegotiated or future trade agreements with Mexico include high-standard, enforceable environmental provisions that empower the United States to stand up for communities through meaningful dispute resolution. These provisions should include commitments from the Mexican government to invest in infrastructure improvements that will fix the problems that lead to the sewage spills that have become an all too common hindrance and public health hazard for the people of San Diego County. I strongly believe that NAFTA

benefits both sides of the border. Any withdrawal or weakening of these agreements with our neighboring countries would be detrimental to our national economy.

I thank you for your attention to this issue as your negotiations continue, and stand ready to engage with you throughout this process. I recognize that the negotiation of trade agreements is a complex and time-consuming endeavor, and I appreciate your work on behalf of the United States to produce effective and enforceable updates to NAFTA. I thank you for your attention to this issue as your negotiations continue, and stand ready to engage with you throughout this process.



---

Scott. H. Peters  
Member of Congress