

POLITICO Pro's Morning Trade newsletter logo



BY [DANIEL DESROCHERS](#) AND [ARI HAWKINS](#)

QUICK FIX

- **Groups are hurrying to file public comment with the USTR** ahead of President Donald Trump's plan to impose reciprocal tariffs on April 2.
- **House Republicans from agriculture-heavy states penned a letter to Trump** asking him to negotiate new trade deals.
- **The European Union is delaying its plan to launch retaliatory tariffs** against the U.S. after some member countries openly criticized some of the bloc's targets.

It's Thursday, March 20. Welcome to Morning Trade. Got news tips? Suggestions? Want to grab a coffee? Hit us up at: ahawkins@politico.com, ddesrochers@politico.com and dpalmer@politico.com. Follow us on X: [@_AriHawkins](#), [@drdesrochers](#) and [@tradereporter](#).

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DRIVING THE DAY

Putting in their two cents: At least 757 organizations have submitted public comments in response to Trump's memorandum on "America First Trade Policy" and on "Reciprocal Trade and Tariffs."

The groups range from crawfish processors in Louisiana to the timber industry of Idaho, as well as the governments of Canada and Brazil, which argued that their [balanced trade relationship with the U.S.](#) should be enough to stave off any tariffs the administration is planning.

I need a zero: Chambers of commerce from around the world also submitted comments, the majority of which argued that the Trump administration should avoid imposing new tariffs. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, which has been active in opposing Trump's tariffs, even urged a "zero-zero" approach — meaning that countries should aim to strike deals to eliminate tariffs.

"The best pro-growth response to foreign trade barriers is to negotiate enforceable trade agreements to eliminate tariffs and other trade barriers, open foreign markets, and guarantee

reciprocity,” the Chamber of Commerce wrote.

The American chambers of commerce in other nations, like Switzerland and Australia, argued that the existing status quo between their country and the U.S. was fair. But the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan urged the Trump administration to seek better deals in several areas, including health care, the digital economy and the auto industry.

“Addressing these barriers will foster a more level playing field that benefits both

American and Japanese stakeholders while strengthening bilateral trade relations,” the chamber wrote.

Build the (tariff) wall: But many domestic industry groups asked the administration to follow through on its tariff threats. The American Kitchen Cabinet Alliance said the U.S. should protect domestic manufacturers by imposing tariffs on kitchen cabinets, bathroom vanities and their components from China, Malaysia, Mexico, Thailand and Vietnam.

The association even included a list of more than \$30 million in investments over the past four years from kitchen cabinet makers, saying those investments wouldn’t have been possible without the antidumping duties and Section 301 tariffs currently in place on China.

They weren’t the only ones who wanted a chance to help shore up domestic industries. Several U.S. mattress manufacturers asked for a tariff on mattresses from Indonesia. And the shrimp industry is trying to block India, Indonesia, Ecuador and Vietnam from dumping cheap shrimp into the U.S. market.

AGRICULTURE CORNER

AG PUSHES FOR MORE TRADE: Twenty House Republicans sent a letter on Thursday asking the White House to negotiate new trade deals that will increase agricultural exports as part of the president’s trade agenda.

“For far too long, American farmers and ranchers have been targeted by foreign governments with prohibitively high tariff and non-tariff barriers,” the lawmakers wrote in the letter, which was led by Rep. [Jodey Arrington](#) (R-Texas) [and obtained by Morning Trade.](#)

Why it matters: The letter is the latest signal that the agricultural community would prefer more trade over tariffs. And it comes as Trump administration officials say they are engaging in talks with a range of countries looking to avoid the so-called reciprocal tariffs coming on April 2.

The Trump administration should “keep our farmers and ranchers in mind and negotiate strong and effective trade agreements with our partners that increase exports of American agricultural products” as it pursues its reciprocal and America First trade agenda, they wrote.

The lawmakers also urged the Trump administration to address the “nonreciprocal” tariffs imposed by foreign nations, which they said have suppressed demand for U.S. products.

The letter also praised Trump's USMCA deal, which Trump negotiated with Mexico and Canada during his first term, for tearing “down the massive barriers facing American agriculture, unleashing exports and rebalancing trade.”

Keep in mind: Officials from both Mexico and Canada have argued that the Trump administration violated the USMCA when he imposed 25 percent tariffs on both countries at the beginning of March.

WORLD VIEW

EU PRESSES PAUSE: EU trade chief Maroš Šefčovič announced Thursday that the bloc would push back its initial round of retaliatory tariffs in response to U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum, and instead respond with tariffs on \$28 billion in U.S. goods on April 13.

Šefčovič said the delay would give the EU more time to negotiate and to hone their targets as the Trump administration barrels ahead with its plan of reciprocal tariffs on April 2, [according to our colleague Jakob Weizman in Brussels](#).

It also comes as France, Ireland and Italy criticized the EU's decision to target American whiskey. All three would be particularly hurt by Trump's pledge to respond to whiskey tariffs with a 200 percent tariff on European wine and spirits.

The view from the White House: White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said the administration is seeing movement from “around the world” as countries hurry to try and strike deals to avoid any potential tariffs.

“I think you're seeing countries are taking the president seriously,” Leavitt said. “They understand that he is going to do what's right for American workers and families.”

TRADE OVERNIGHT

- India and the UK are “very close” to securing a trade deal, [POLITICO Pro reports](#)
- The White House won't publicly release a report on OECD tax options, [POLITICO Pro reports](#)
- K Street is running into a ‘nearly un-lobbyable’ Elon Musk, [POLITICO reports](#)

ON THE CALENDAR

9:30 a.m.: The George Washington University Elliott School of International Affairs [holds a discussion](#) on EU-U.S. bilateral relations.

THAT'S ALL FOR MORNING TRADE! See you again soon! In the meantime, drop the team a line: dpalmer@politico.com, d-desrochers@politico.com and ahawkins@politico.com. Follow us [@POLITICOPro](#) and [@Morning_Trade](#).