



THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
WASHINGTON

August 19, 2021

The Honorable Jim Jordan
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Jordan:

Thank you for your letter regarding the proposal by India and South Africa to waive certain provisions of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights in relation to prevention, containment, or treatment of COVID-19.

The top priority of the Biden-Harris Administration is saving lives and ending the pandemic in the United States and around the world. The Administration's aim is to get as many safe and effective vaccines to as many people as fast as possible. Both the U.S. and global economic recoveries require strong progress in addressing the public health crisis, including comprehensive and equitable access to vaccines. As our vaccine supply for the American people is secured, the Administration will continue its work to ramp up efforts – working with the private sector and all possible partners – to expand vaccine manufacturing and distribution.

This is a global health crisis, and the extraordinary circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic call for extraordinary measures. The Administration believes strongly in intellectual property protections, but in service of ending this pandemic, supports the waiver of those protections for COVID-19 vaccines. We plan to exercise the necessary leadership at the WTO and will actively participate in text-based negotiations needed for the WTO and its 164 members to be relevant in responding to the needs of the world economy in the midst of a global pandemic. Those discussions will take time given the consensus-based nature of the institution and the complexity of the issues involved.

I appreciate you sharing your views on the waiver proposal and the importance of intellectual property to our innovation industries. I look forward to continuing to work with Members of Congress on these and other important trade issues.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss this or any other issues in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K. Tai', with a stylized flourish.

Ambassador Katherine Tai