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June 22, 2015

The Honorable Michael Froman
United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Trade Representative Froman:

I am writing to request that you release the draft text of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and make the TPP trade negotiation process more transparent and accessible to the American People.

My constituents support free trade and increasing good-paying jobs and economic growth in New Jersey. They, however, want trade agreements that are transparent and good for American workers and American taxpayers. Yet the TPP negotiating text is currently classified and only members of Congress and staffers with security clearance can access it. Members of Congress can read the draft agreement under heavy restrictions, but they cannot publicly discuss or consult on what they have read. I believe declassifying and releasing the negotiating text online will bring much-needed transparency, accountability and public awareness to the Trans Pacific Partnership trade agreement and its policy implications.

There is precedent for this important act of transparency in negotiating trade agreements. The Bush Administration allowed the American people to view the entire Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) agreement in 2001 prior to its enactment. Then U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick released the draft text of the FTAA agreement online months before Congress granted President George W. Bush so-called "fast track authority" for that agreement. Mr. Zoellick called the act, "unprecedented effort to make international trade and its economic and social benefits more understandable to the public."

It is time for the Obama Administration to release the Trans-Pacific Partnership's negotiating text to the public prior to any further congressional action on the President's trade agenda. Best personal wishes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leonard Lance".

Leonard Lance
Member of Congress