

June 17, 2026

The Honorable Jamieson Greer
The United States Trade Representative
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Ambassador Greer,

On behalf of the Distilled Spirits Council of the U.S., I am writing in advance of your upcoming trip to India to underscore the importance of increasing access to the Indian market for the long-term growth of the U.S. spirits sector, and to offer our support as you enter this phase of the negotiations. We enthusiastically applaud the Trump Administration's commitment to open markets, reduce trade barriers, and increase U.S. exports. Opening new markets, particularly India, is essential to support domestic investment, jobs and growth in the U.S. spirits industry.

Currently, the U.S. spirits industry is facing several challenges in the U.S. market; domestic spirits sales declined 2.2% in 2025, the first decline in decades; exports fell nearly 4%; and U.S. distilleries lost 3.5% of their workforce from September 2024 to September 2025. As such, U.S. spirits producers are increasingly looking to export markets with significant potential to expand sales, including. As you enter this phase of negotiations, we reiterate our request that the U.S. secure an agreement with India that provides preferential market access for all categories of bottled and bulk U.S. distilled spirits. At a minimum, the final tariff commitments should ensure that U.S. distilled spirits are not placed at a competitive disadvantage compared to other imported spirits.

We have seen first-hand the importance of securing tariff reductions and the opportunity it provides to allow American spirits to compete on a more level playing field in key export markets. Specifically, President Trump's leadership last year in securing the reduction of India's tariff on bottled Bourbon from 150% to 100% has already delivered tangible benefits for U.S. exporters. In 2025, exports of bottled Bourbon to India increased by nearly 22% compared to 2024, contributing to total U.S. spirits exports to India valued at \$13.1 million. American Whiskey accounted for 87% of these exports.

However, significant barriers remain as India continues to apply a 150% tariff on bulk Bourbon and all other U.S. distilled spirits. U.S. distilled spirits also face significant barriers at the state level, including challenges related to the Maharashtra Made Liquor policy and ongoing payment delays in Telangana. Despite being the largest whiskey market in the world by volume, American Whiskey exports to India totaled only \$11.4 million in 2025, placing it behind much smaller markets like Singapore, Latvia, and the UAE. Moreover, American Whiskey only accounted for 3% of whiskey imported into India in 2025.

At the same time, India has secured trade agreements with the UK and the EU, which are major spirits and whiskey exporters and will place American Whiskeys at a competitive disadvantage vis-à-vis Scotch Whisky and Irish Whiskey. Under its agreements with the EU and

the UK, India has agreed to reduce its tariffs on all EU and UK spirits to 75% upon implementation, and to 40% over 10 years.

Accordingly, we respectfully request that the administration secure tariff reductions that are at least comparable – if not better – to India’s agreements with the EU and UK across all categories of bottled and bulk U.S. distilled spirits, ensuring our exporters have fair and competitive access to the Indian marketplace. Ensuring a level playing field is essential so that American producers can compete fairly and fully realize the potential of this critically important market.

Thank you for your efforts on behalf of U.S. distilleries, their farmer suppliers and all the service providers in between that bring our great American spirits to markets around the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chris R. Swonger".

Chris R. Swonger
President and CEO
Distilled Spirits Council of
the U.S.