

The Honorable Dave Camp, Chairman  
House Committee on Ways and Means  
1102 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sander Levin, Ranking Member  
House Committee on Ways and Means  
1106 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

June 29, 2012

Dear Chairman Camp and Ranking Member Levin,

I write in opposition to H.R. 4822, a bill to extend the temporary suspension of duty on shopping bags with an outer surface made of Non-Woven Polypropylene (NWPP); H.R. 4823, a bill to suspend the duty on spun-bonded, non-woven, high-density polyethylene materials; and H.R. 4824, a bill to suspend the duty on non-woven recycled polyethylene terephthalate.

I support the use of inexpensive reusable plastic shopping bags as an alternative to disposable bags. However, I believe that the legislation referenced above will serve to benefit mainly one country, China, at the expense of American workers and the firms that employ them. The imports covered by these bills compete with American-made reusable plastic bags, including products made currently by manufacturers based in California, some of whom use recycled materials in their product.

The importation of reusable bags made of non-woven polypropylene (those covered by H.R. 4822), has increased significantly, as the tariff on these bags has been suspended since 2010. These bags are imported more and more from China. This has served to stifle U.S. manufacturing and curtailed the development of a U.S. industry in this growing area – consumers and many municipalities increasingly demanding that the use of disposable plastic bags be discouraged or eliminated. The tariff suspension called for by H.R. 4822 should therefore be allowed to expire to allow for the expansion of U.S. manufacturing in this area.

H.R. 4823 is a proposal for a new tariff exemption for bags that serve the same purpose as those covered by H.R. 4822, and will expand the number of products that compete with American alternatives on a duty-free basis. Finally, the products covered by H.R. 4824 directly compete with identical products made by American firms. In my home state of California, a company is currently manufacturing bags of this specific type made of recycled plastic from bottle waste. We should not encourage the importation of plastic from China over our own recycled product.

Moreover, while I am generally not a proponent of such agreements, it is important to note that the U.S. can currently import bags covered by the three bills duty free from Mexico and other

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Free Trade Agreement partners, with whom we have *reciprocal trade benefits*. Put simply, the main beneficiary of this legislation is China, a country with which we run the largest bilateral trade deficit and which systematically discriminates against American products.

United States manufacturers can and do produce bags that meet the demand of U.S. consumers for an alternative to disposable shopping bags. I therefore request that the committee decline to include these provisions in the Miscellaneous Tariff Bill. Marc Shultz (ext 6-8440; [marc.shultz@mail.house.gov](mailto:marc.shultz@mail.house.gov)) of my office can provide your staff with more information on the U.S manufacturing that will be affected by these provisions.

Sincerely,



Brad Sherman