



February 27, 2021

Maria L. Pagan  
Acting United States Trade Representative  
600 17th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Acting USTR Pagan:

For nearly twenty years, America's biopharmaceutical industry and many building trades unions have built a strong partnership combining cutting-edge scientific innovation and a readily available, highly skilled unionized workforce prepared to respond to the current pandemic in record time.

The Pharmaceutical Industry Labor-Management Association (PILMA), an organization that formalizes this partnership, complementing the discovery of medical innovation with a commitment to supporting high-quality union construction jobs. Often, PILMA takes stances on policy issues that impact the industry and its workforce. Placing an artificial ceiling on the price of medicines will thwart the very development of new research we are currently celebrating and, by extension, causing a loss in infrastructure investment and a loss of jobs.

PILMA is concerned about a proposal currently before the World Trade Organization (WTO). Last fall, South Africa and India proposed that the WTO waive global obligations to protect intellectual property related to fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. PILMA views this proposal with great concern and believes that its sponsors are using the pandemic to advance longstanding trade policies that would both undermine global health and harm jobs here in the United States.

PILMA has a longstanding position supporting intellectual property protections in the U.S. and throughout the world. As PILMA has previously stated, we support intellectual property rights to be part of international rules and regulations that drive U.S. economic growth, job opportunities, and exports.

PILMA is concerned that countries like India and South Africa are seeking to erode the global intellectual property protections that have driven job growth and new discoveries in the United States. Thanks to these established protections, American companies have invested billions in research and development, creating the fertile ecosystem that enables the construction of

high-quality research and manufacturing facilities that can be built only by the most highly skilled workers. Our members are proud to have played our part in constructing the advanced facilities that will help end this health crisis and those to come.

PILMA therefore encourages you to continue to oppose this extreme and unnecessary proposal at the WTO, as well as proposals in any other multilateral organization that would undermine American innovation and, as a result, jeopardize American manufacturing jobs. Intellectual property spurs investment in innovation and creates high-paying union jobs here in the United States. American trade policy should strengthen America's essential biomedical research and manufacturing sector and, in so doing, accelerate the discovery and development of new treatments and cures to benefit the world.

Sincerely,



Timothy E. Dickson  
Executive Director  
Pharmaceutical Industry Labor-Management Association  
101 North Union Street, Suite 305  
Alexandria, VA 22314

cc:

Hon. Ron Wyden, Chairman, Senate Committee on Finance  
Hon. Mike Crapo, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Finance  
Hon. Richard Neal, Chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means  
Hon. Kevin Brady, Ranking Member, House Committee on Ways and Means

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## **ABOUT PILMA**

For 15 years, the Pharmaceutical Industry Labor-Management Association has united the biopharmaceutical industry and union workers with the dual goals of fostering innovation of life-saving cures and securing high-quality union construction jobs. As the partnership has grown over the years, so has its impact. Labor and industry recognize the strength in their partnership: strong industry naturally leads to good jobs and a vibrant economy.

The pharmaceutical industry members of PILMA recognize that the most highly skilled workers are needed to construct and maintain the highest quality research and manufacturing facilities. Following each new drug trial, research facilities must be wiped clean – entire systems must be changed, surfaces must be sterilized and other equipment replaced. This requires highly skilled reliable labor that the industry can depend on to do the job right. America's Building Trades Unions spend upwards of \$1 billion training their members each year. With state-of-the-art

training facilities all over the country the building trades are ready to meet the needs of today and the challenges of tomorrow.

## **MISSION**

The unions and companies of the Pharmaceutical Industry Labor-Management Association recognize that a strong domestic pharmaceutical industry providing innovative, affordable medicines is vital to the American people. The U.S. biopharmaceutical industry discovers and manufactures medicines that enhance the quality of life and longevity. The U.S. industry is the global leader in scientific research, innovation and manufacturing. It provides hundreds of thousands of high-paying jobs and contributes over \$200 billion to the gross domestic product. At the same time, the Association recognizes the need to address issues of mutual interest and concern to the industry, its workers and all Americans, including: access to medicines and affordability of medicines; funding of innovative research and future cures; and maintaining a strong U.S. industry.

The Association resolves to:

- Work together on legislative, regulatory and other key issues affecting the pharmaceutical industry and organized labor in the national interest;
- Discuss areas where there is disagreement between the parties in a committed effort to find common ground and mutual benefit;
- Investigate the issues affecting access to and affordability of medicines;
- Focus on maintaining strong stateside employment and research leadership for the U.S. industry.