

Josh Kaul
Wisconsin Attorney General



P.O. Box 7857
Madison, WI 53707-7857

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 7, 2026

Wisconsin DOJ Urges U.S. Trade Representative to Stop Hitting American Consumers and Businesses with Illegal Tariffs

MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Justice and a coalition of 21 other states are urging the United States Trade Representative (USTR) to change course and drop its plan to continue Trump’s illegal tariffs. In a [comment letter](#), the states pushed back on the USTR’s latest proposal – tariffs on the European Union and 59 other countries, after the Supreme Court ruled against their first attempt in February and the Court of International Trade struck down their second attempt in May.

“The Trump administration’s illegal tariffs have been harmful to the economy and made life less affordable for Wisconsin families,” said AG Kaul. “President Trump needs to let go of his fixation with tariffs.”

For more than a year, President Trump has damaged the American economy by imposing tariffs without the legal authority to do so. Initially, the President claimed that the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) allowed him to impose tariffs of any amount, on any product, from any country, for any length of time. In February, the Supreme Court rejected that argument, concluding that the IEEPA tariffs were unlawful. President Trump then turned to a separate law that had never been used before—Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974—and announced 10 percent tariffs on most products worldwide. But Wisconsin and 23 other states successfully challenged those tariffs.

Now, Trump directed the USTR to investigate the European Union and 59 other countries, which together account for 99.4 percent of all U.S. imports, to determine

whether those countries are doing enough to combat forced labor in global trade. Two and a half months later, the USTR's report landed on the same conclusion Trump wanted all along: 10 percent tariffs on 14 economies, 12.5 percent tariffs on the other 46, with the exact same exceptions as before and no explanation of how the new tariffs will combat forced labor.

A recent analysis by researchers at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York concluded that nearly 90 percent of the costs of tariffs in 2025 were paid by American consumers and businesses. By imposing yet another round of price increases on American consumers and businesses, President Trump is tripling down on failed economic policies.

The letter argues that this latest round of tariffs is illegal, outside the scope of the authority Congress gave the USTR, and unsupported by evidence.

Joining Wisconsin in this letter are the states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Oregon, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington.