

NFTC Releases Major Study of New Trend in Trade Barriers

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Calls for harmonized regulations based on sound science and developed in transparent and inclusive manner

Washington DC – Recognizing the alarming increase in trade barriers that ignore sound science, the National Foreign Trade Council today released an extensively researched white paper detailing the application of burdensome national standards and technical regulations that hamper free trade. Identifying examples ranging from beef to computers, the NFTC paper, [*Looking Behind the Curtain: The Growth of Trade Barriers that Ignore Sound Science*](#), offers powerful evidence of a deliberate strategy to invoke the need for ‘precaution’ in order to protect ailing or lagging industries and block market access.

“I don’t think there is a real appreciation for the breadth of the application of unjust trade restrictions across a multitude of industries. If you look at only one product or industry at a time, you miss the tremendous damage these barriers represent not only to U.S. exports but also to the development efforts of many poorer nations,” said NFTC President Bill Reinsch. Reinsch urged industries and nations to come together in their opposition to these trade-restricting practices.

To provide substance to the debate, NFTC has gathered evidence of circumstances:

- Where regulations and standards are not based on sound science or subject to rational and balanced risk assessment;
- Where regulations and standards are not based on, or do not adhere to internationally agreed upon standards; and
- Where U.S. and other foreign exporters are effectively prevented from participating fully in the regulatory drafting and review processes.

“It’s extremely interesting and more than a little disturbing to see how the same basic premise, namely the supposed need to prove a product or technology totally risk free, has been applied to create insurmountable hurdles to so many different products. We’re also seeing more and more attempts to dictate not how products perform but rather how they are made. Both these approaches are clearly violations of the WTO rules-based system,” Reinsch continued.

According to the NFTC paper, impacted products include:

- Beef and poultry
- Fresh and processed fruits and nuts
- Food additives, vitamins and nutrients
- Wines
- Foods derived through the application of biotechnology
- Aeronautics
- Automobiles
- Consumer electronics
- Computers
- Chemicals and downstream users including textiles, plastics, and finished consumer goods
- Toiletries and cosmetics
- Household and industrial biocidal products

“One of the most alarming trends that our analysis identifies is the apparently targeted application of these restrictions to the most promising areas of technology where we expect to have significant future economic growth potential. As damaging as this may be to the U.S. and other developed economies, it is even more threatening to the poorest nations for whom these technologies may make the difference between simply surviving and thriving,” Reinsch concluded.

NFTC released this paper at a panel discussion featuring speakers from the United States Trade Representative’s Office, the European Community delegation, and Mexico.

For a copy of the [NFTC paper](#), please

see <http://www.nftc.org/default/white%20paper/TR2%20final.pdf> for the full paper and for the Executive Summary

<http://www.nftc.org/default/white%20paper/Exec%20SummaryII.pdf>