

Comment Opportunity: U.S.- Japan Trade Agreement

October 30, 2018

The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) has opened a public comment period in connection with the proposed U.S.-Japan Trade Agreement negotiations. On October 16, 2018, [USTR notified Congress](#) of its intent to enter into trade talks with Japan. Those discussions cannot begin until mid-January 2019 at the earliest under the requirements of the Trade Promotion Authority law.

Any member of the public – including individual companies, industry coalitions, and trade associations – may submit **written comments to USTR by November 26, 2018**. That is also the deadline to submit written notice of intent to testify, along with a summary of intended testimony, at a **public hearing to be held on December 10, 2018 at 9:30 am**. The hearing will be held by the Trade Policy Staff Committee, an interagency committee chaired by USTR and comprised of 20 executive branch agencies that provide input into the Administration’s trade-related decision-making through review of policy papers and negotiating documents, and eliciting public feedback. Procedures are available for commenters to submit business confidential information.

Comments and/or hearing testimony may address any issue that the submitter believes is relevant to the development of USTR’s negotiating objectives for the agreement and policy positions going into the discussions. Examples include, but are not limited to, advice on existing product- or industry-specific barriers to trade, including specific tariffs; measures that may be taken to improve product- or industry-specific access to the Japanese market; experience with particular government policies or practices that should be addressed by the negotiations; comments on export priorities or import sensitivities; customs and trade facilitation issues that the trade discussions should address; and the economic costs and benefits to U.S. interests on the removal or reduction of existing trade barriers, including tariffs.

While USTR will issue specific negotiating objectives at least 30 days before the trade discussions begin, the agency has already identified several general priorities. These include addressing the “underperforming” nature of Japan as an important U.S. export market, tackling the tariff and non-tariff barriers for automobiles, agriculture, and services that has led to “chronic U.S. trade imbalances,” and finding ways to expand trade and investment between the two countries.

If you are interested in developing comments or appearing at the hearing, please contact [Kelley Drye’s International Trade practice](#).