

## United States Senate

July 31, 2025

The Honorable Jamieson Greer  
U.S. Trade Representative  
600 17<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
Washington DC, 20508

Dear Ambassador Greer,

Last week, the White House announced what it claims is a “historic trade deal” with Indonesia that secures benefits for the United States “once considered impossible” and “deliver[s] lasting wins for the American people.”<sup>1</sup> In recent days, however, statements by the Indonesian government suggest that these “lasting wins” may not exist.

The joint statement released by the White House asserts that “Indonesia will remove restrictions on exports to the United States of industrial commodities, including critical minerals.”<sup>2</sup> As you know, Indonesia has long maintained a ban on the export of many critical minerals, including raw nickel ore,<sup>3</sup> which hurts American workers and businesses. This export ban has catalyzed massive Chinese investment into Indonesia’s domestic nickel sector – with over 90 percent of Indonesia’s nickel smelters constructed by Chinese companies<sup>4</sup> – which in turn have flooded the global market with underpriced product that undermines U.S. firms. For this reason, groups like the American Iron and Steel Institute welcomed the White House joint statement and Indonesia’s supposed commitment to lift its export ban.<sup>5</sup> A removal of Indonesia’s nickel export ban indeed would be significant.

However, Indonesian officials are now saying that they made no such commitment. Indonesia’s Coordinating Minister of Economic Affairs, Airlangga Hartarto, has said that the U.S.-Indonesia agreement does not touch Indonesia’s export restrictions and that “nothing will be removed.”<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Indonesia’s Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources – which oversees Indonesia’s mining sector – has confirmed that Indonesia will not export raw minerals to the United States and that there are no directives or policy revisions permitting such exports to the United States. Key industry groups in Indonesia – like the Indonesia

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<sup>1</sup> [“Fact Sheet: The United States and Indonesia Reach Historic Trade Deal,”](#) *The White House*, July 22, 2025.

<sup>2</sup> [“Joint Statement on Framework for United States-Indonesia Agreement on Reciprocal Trade,”](#) *The White House*, July 22, 2025.

<sup>3</sup> [“2025 National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers,”](#) *U.S. Trade Representative*, March 31, 2025.

<sup>4</sup> [“Diversifying Investment in Indonesia’s Mining Sector,”](#) Gracelin Baskaran, *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, July 11, 2024.

<sup>5</sup> [“AISI Welcomes Framework to Address Indonesia’s Export Restrictions on Critical Minerals,”](#) American Iron and Steel Institute, July 22, 2025.

<sup>6</sup> [“Government Confirms Indonesia Won’t Export Raw Minerals to the US,”](#) Ilona Estherina, *Tempo English*, July 23, 2025.

Mining Association – are also unaware of any forthcoming changes to the country’s export ban, and continue to tout the success of this policy.<sup>7,8</sup>

Unfortunately, this misalignment between grandiose White House and USTR statements and actual commitments by our trading partners is not unique to this issue. The U.S.-Indonesia joint statement also states that Indonesia will make significant changes to its labor policies, and specifically will “amend its labor laws to ensure that workers’ rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining are fully protected” and “adopt and implement a prohibition on the importation of goods produced by forced or compulsory labor.”<sup>9</sup> When asked about this, however, your Indonesian counterpart again refuted that Indonesia has made such a commitment, stating: “they only ask us to comply with regulations – which we already do.”<sup>10</sup> And we are still waiting to see any official documents to support the President’s assertion that the administration has reached a trade agreement with Vietnam. It has been nearly a month since the President made this announcement, and credible reporting suggests that the “deal” President Trump touted was not actually agreed to by Vietnam.<sup>11</sup>

This is not an effective way to negotiate durable commitments. You pledged at your confirmation hearing to work closely with the Senate Finance Committee and Congress on all trade matters, including negotiations.<sup>12</sup> Instead, we have mostly seen opaqueness and misdirection. I remain concerned that even basic information – such as which countries are the 18 “important trading partners” that the administration is working towards trade deals with – remains withheld from the public and my constituents.<sup>13</sup>

As we look ahead, I strongly urge you to adopt greater transparency and Congressional consultation in your negotiations. Indonesia’s export ban policy is not only an important economic issue impacting U.S. firms, but given Chinese investment in Indonesia’s nickel sector, it has national security implications for our country. I stand ready to work with you to ensure real commitments and real enforceability in our trade agreements, and encourage you to adopt a more effective and transparent approach in your negotiations.

Sincerely,



Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> “[WTO backs EU in nickel dispute, Indonesia plans appeal](#),” *Reuters*, November 30, 2022.

<sup>9</sup> “[Joint Statement on Framework for United States-Indonesia Agreement on Reciprocal Trade](#),” *The White House*, July 22, 2025.

<sup>10</sup> “[Reciprocal trade terms decided mutually: Hartarto on tariff talks](#),” *Antara*, July 23, 2025.

<sup>11</sup> “[Vietnam thought it had a deal on its US tariff rate. Then Trump stepped in](#),” Daniel Desrochers, Phelim Kline and Ari Hawkins, *Politico*, July 10, 2025.

<sup>12</sup> [Testimony of Jamieson Greer](#), Hearing to Consider the Nomination of Jamieson Greer, of Maryland, to be United States Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, February 6, 2025.

<sup>13</sup> “[Bessent floats extending tariff pause for countries in ‘good faith’ trade talks](#),” *CNBC*, Erin Doherty, June 11, 2025.