



December 17, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President, United States of America

RE: Urging U.S. Government Action on Japanese TRQs Restricting U.S. Exports of Leather Footwear to Japan

President Trump:

On behalf of the entire American footwear industry, and the over 1 million American workers we employ, the undersigned organizations urge you to eliminate the tariff rate quota (TRQ) restricting exports of U.S.-made and U.S.-branded leather footwear to Japan as part of any final the U.S.-Japan Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART).

Japan has long maintained a tariff-rate quota (TRQ) on leather footwear imports where it allows only a small amount of leather footwear imports (12 million pairs) to enter each year (total from all countries, not just United States) at an already high duty-rate of 21.6 percent before imposing exorbitant duties that essentially deny entry to those imports. The secondary duty rate is 30 percent or 4,300 Yen per pair (\$27.67/pair), whichever is higher. Although this trade barrier has been listed in every U.S. government *National Trade Estimate* since the report's inception in 1988, Japan has refused to remove this barrier ([See USTR's 2025 National Trade Estimate Report for more details \(Page 230\)](#)).

Japan's TRQ on all leather footwear imports bars U.S. footwear manufacturers and U.S. brands from the Japanese market, one of the largest consumer markets in the world. To highlight the immensity of the trade barrier, please note that, in 2024, the United States, with a population of approximately 343 million people, permitted the import of 465 million pairs of leather footwear, or an average more than 1.3 pairs per every man, woman, and child in the United States. Japan, on the other hand, with a population of approximately 124 million people, allowed in only 12 million pairs of leather footwear, or an average of less than one pair for every ten men, women, or children. As such, the TRQ is filled every year by the end of January.

Over the last few years, U.S. footwear companies have been put at an even bigger disadvantage in the Japanese footwear market because Japan agreed to allow increasing, and eventual duty-free, access for the countries that are party to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

Therefore, we again urge you to make elimination of the Japan leather footwear TRQ a priority in discussions towards finalizing the U.S.-Japan Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART).

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. Please contact [Nate Herman](#) at AAFA if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Sincerely,

Steve Lamar
President & CEO
American Apparel & Footwear
Association (AAFA)

Matt Priest
President & CEO
Footwear Distributors & Retailers
of America (FDRA)

Bill McCann
Executive Director
U.S. Footwear Manufacturers
Association (USFMA)

CC:

- The Honorable Howard Lutnik, Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce
- The Honorable Jameison Greer, U.S. Trade Representative, Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR)