



Contact: K.C. Swanson
kcswanson@uscsi.org

CSI Urges Adoption of Permanent Suspension of Duties on Digital Trade at WTO Ministerial

Washington, D.C. (March 9, 2026) —When WTO members meet for a ministerial conference later this month, they should adopt a permanent moratorium on duties on electronic transmissions, said Coalition of Services Industries President Christine Bliss.

In the past, a longstanding agreement not to impose duties on digital trade was periodically renewed by all WTO members every two years. But more recently a small handful of governments have sought to block its renewal, generating substantial uncertainty for business. That has given rise to a new push for a lasting agreement.

“There is growing momentum at the WTO, including among developing countries, to adopt a permanent agreement to suspend duties for digitally delivered products and services,” said Bliss. “Doing so would help to restore stability and predictability at a critical moment for the global trading system.”

Economic research from UNCTAD, the World Bank, the IMF, the OECD and others have documented the value of the moratorium on e-transmissions duties for developing countries, as well as the developed world. Imported digital products and services are not only valuable in their own right, but also serve as key inputs into manufacturing and agricultural products bound for export. The potential imposition of duties on those inputs stands to both raise costs and weaken global trade volumes.

“The duties suspension has won consistent support from the vast majority of WTO members over its nearly 30-year life span,” Bliss said. “Rather than spend any more time on this issue, it would be a far better use of resources to focus on making progress in digital trade rulemaking. We should adopt a permanent moratorium and press ahead with a more forward-looking digital agenda.”

CSI is the leading U.S. industry association devoted to promoting the trade policy priorities of the U.S. services sector on services and digital issues. Our members include companies that provide financial services, information and communication technology services, telecom services, express delivery and logistics, media and entertainment, distribution, and professional services to all sectors of the economy, including manufacturing and agriculture. CSI members include manufacturers of consumer electronics, telecommunications equipment and health and nutrition products. Our members operate in all 50 states and in nearly 200 countries, representing both large and small firms. CSI also works with counterpart organizations around the globe as co-chair of the Global Services Coalition and the Asia Pacific Services Coalition.