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JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE
(CREATED PURSUANT TO SEC. 5(a) OF PUBLIC LAW 304, 79TH CONGRESS)

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LAURA EPSTEIN, DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

June 18, 2025

Mr. Vivek Sankaran
Chief Executive Officer
Albertsons Companies, Inc.
250 E. Parkcenter Blvd.
Boise, ID 83706

Dear Mr. Sankaran:

I am writing to request information about the impact of President Trump's 50 percent steel and aluminum tariffs on your stores, suppliers, and grocery costs.¹ High grocery prices are a top economic concern for Americans,² and experts state that tariffs could significantly increase the cost of canned foods.³ Experts have also noted potential impacts from tariffs on the costs of shelving, equipment, transportation, and other inputs that grocery stores and their suppliers need to operate, which, in turn, could also lead to higher food prices for customers.⁴

The United States imports nearly 70 percent of the steel that manufacturers use in canned fruits, vegetables, and other essential food items.⁵ The United States also imports roughly 50 percent of its aluminum, which manufacturers use for basic items like beverage cans, aluminum

¹ Ana Swanson and Ian Austen, *Higher U.S. Tariffs on Steel and Aluminum Imports Take Effect*, The New York Times (June 4, 2025) (www.nytimes.com/2025/06/04/business/economy/trump-tariffs-steel-aluminum.html).

² Rebecca Leppert, *5 Facts About Food Costs in America*, Pew Research Center (May 15, 2025) (www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/05/15/5-facts-about-food-costs-in-america/).

³ Katie Pryzyk, *Packaging Sector Warns 50% Tariffs on Steel and Aluminum Will Drive Up Food Costs*, FoodDive (June 4, 2025) (www.fooddive.com/news/packaging-manufacturers-tariffs-steel-aluminum-doubled/749792/).

⁴ Samantha Fields, *Trump's Steel and Aluminum Tariffs Could Drive Up Grocery Costs*, Marketplace (June 3, 2025) (www.marketplace.org/story/2025/06/03/trumps-steel-and-aluminum-tariffs-could-drive-up-grocery-costs); Kristin Popp, *NGA's Fight for Independent Grocers*, Grocery from Her Seat (www.nationalgrocers.org/foundation/women-grocers-of-america/wga-podcast/) (last visited June 4, 2025).

⁵ *Id.*

foil, and packaging.⁶ New steel and aluminum tariffs could increase store prices for items in steel cans by 9 to 15 percent, according to data released earlier this month by the Consumer Brands Association, whose members include Campbell's and Del Monte Foods.⁷ Increased costs may also coincide with decreasing revenue for retailers; an April survey found that 88 percent of Americans have changed their grocery shopping habits due to economic pressure, and more than a third of these shoppers have cut back on nonessential items.⁸

Experts have also raised concerns about the impact of tariffs on grocery operations and logistics. In a recent interview, Greg Ferrara, President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Grocers Association, asked: "What does [the imposition of tariffs] do to the price of refrigeration? What does that do to the price of store shelving and other displays?"⁹ According to Ferrara, suppliers "can't even touch" certain equipment due to price increases from tariffs.¹⁰ Analysis by the credit rating agency S&P Global underscores the harmful impact of tariffs on these types of suppliers.¹¹ For example, even prior to the latest steel and aluminum levies, refrigerator manufacturer Carrier Global Corp. and forklift manufacturer Hyster-Yale Inc. already faced potential credit downgrades related to tariffs.¹²

Information from Albertsons Companies (Albertsons) can help quantify potential cost increases for consumers, as well as the related consequences for employment in the grocery supply chain. Previous statements from Albertsons partially address impacts that tariffs may or may not have on prices, but these statements have not specifically addressed the impact of potential steel and aluminum tariffs. In its 2024 annual report, Albertsons noted that "[p]roduct and raw material supply disruptions, especially those related to fresh products, may have an

⁶ *The Top Sources of U.S. Steel and Aluminum Imports*, Reuters (Feb. 10, 2025), (www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/where-does-us-get-its-steel-aluminum-2025-02-10/).

⁷ Bob Tita, *The Canned-Food Aisle is Getting Squeeze by Rising Steel Tariffs*, The Wall Street Journal (June 9, 2025) (www.wsj.com/business/the-canned-food-aisle-is-getting-squeezed-by-rising-steel-tariffs-c478693c).

⁸ Nicolette Baker, *9 in 10 Americans Are Changing How They Shop for Groceries to Save Money — Even High Earners*, Food & Wine (Apr. 26, 2025) (www.foodandwine.com/grocery-shopping-habits-inflation-lentingtrees-survey-2025-11721837).

⁹ Popp, *supra* note 4.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *U.S. Capital Goods Companies Price In Tariff Costs To Defend Credit*, S&P Global Ratings (May 7, 2025) (www.spglobal.com/ratings/en/research/articles/250507-u-s-capital-goods-companies-price-in-tariff-costs-to-defend-credit-101622743).

¹² *Id.*

adverse effect on our profitability and operating results.”¹³ When asked by analysts on an April 15, 2025, investor call to elaborate on the risks of tariffs, an Albertsons executive stated that the company procures more than 90 percent of its products domestically, but “we also recognize though that even in those domestic purchases there are impacts from ingredients that are sourced from tariff impacted areas.”¹⁴ Asked by analysts to discuss plans for new stores, renovations, and other capital expenditures for 2025, the executive said Albertsons would open new stores but declined to provide details on locations, spending, and the factors that might influence these decisions.¹⁵

To aid the Joint Economic Committee – Minority in analyzing the impact of steel and aluminum tariffs, specifically, on food prices and jobs within the grocery supply chain, I request the following information:

1. A description of the supply chain disruptions or cost increases related to steel and aluminum tariffs that you anticipate, how you expect those disruptions or cost increases to vary by location, and the regions in which you anticipate the greatest disruptions or cost increases, including with respect to both food products and durable goods;
2. A description of how steel and aluminum tariffs are projected to impact the costs of private label goods specifically, including but not limited to canned foods and frozen meals, and including specific examples;
3. A description of how disruptions in your acquisition of products, inputs, or transportation associated with steel and aluminum tariffs have manifested, whether in terms of cancelled orders, modification of orders, changes in suppliers, delayed delivery, partial delivery of ordered goods, increased cost of goods, or increased transportation costs, including for both food products and durable goods;
4. Expenses for the last five quarters related to the acquisition and maintenance of durable goods affected by steel and aluminum tariffs, including but not limited to refrigeration, lighting, shelving, and end caps, and including the estimated number of employees and/or contractors employed in the installation, transportation, and maintenance of such goods;

¹³ Albertsons Companies, Inc., Annual Report (Form 10-K) at 15 (filed Apr. 23, 2025) (www.sec.gov/ix?doc=/Archives/edgar/data/0001646972/000164697225000052/aci-20250222.htm).

¹⁴ Albertsons Companies, Inc., Q4 2024 Earnings Call Transcript, Seeking Alpha (Apr. 15, 2025) (seekingalpha.com/article/4775303-albertsons-companies-inc-aci-q4-2024-earnings-call-transcript).

¹⁵ *Id.*

5. An estimate of the number of jobs your company supports directly or indirectly in the construction, manufacturing, transportation, logistics, food packaging, and food processing industries;
6. For each of your top 25 canned food items and top 10 aluminum foil and storage items by sales value:
 - a. Total inventory cost, total revenue, and profit margin for each of the last five quarters, nationally and by metro area;
 - b. Data sufficient to show prices before and after:
 1. Tariffs in effect as of January 1, 2025;
 2. Steel and aluminum tariffs in effect as of April 5, 2025;
 3. Steel and aluminum tariffs in effect as of June 4, 2025; and
 - c. A description of the impact of steel and aluminum tariffs on these price changes and how added costs for these items, if any, are distributed through applicable supply chains; and
7. A description of the shopping patterns of SNAP recipients specific to their purchases of canned goods over the past five quarters as well as observed and expected trends with respect to:
 - a. The proportion of canned goods per SNAP transaction by value;
 - b. The number of canned goods per SNAP transaction; and
 - c. SNAP recipients' mix of brand name and private label canned goods.

Please provide your responses as soon as possible but in no event later than July 9, 2025. If you have any questions related to this request, please contact Jacob Marx of the Committee staff at Jacob_Marx@jec.senate.gov or (202) 224-0372. Please send any official correspondence relating to this request to Jacob_Marx@jec.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



Margaret Wood Hassan
Ranking Member

cc: David Schweikert
Chairman

Eric S. Schmitt
Vice Chairman

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MARK KELLY, ARIZONA

LAURA EPSTEIN, DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

June 18, 2025

Mr. Ron Vachris
President and Chief Executive Officer
Costco Wholesale Corporation
999 Lake Drive
Issaquah, WA 98027

Dear Mr. Vachris:

I am writing to request information about the impact of President Trump's 50 percent steel and aluminum tariffs on your stores, suppliers, and grocery costs.¹ High grocery prices are a top economic concern for Americans,² and experts state that tariffs could significantly increase the cost of canned foods.³ Experts have also noted potential impacts from tariffs on the costs of shelving, equipment, transportation, and other inputs that grocery stores and their suppliers need to operate, which, in turn, could also lead to higher food prices for customers.⁴

The United States imports nearly 70 percent of the steel that manufacturers use in canned fruits, vegetables, and other essential food items.⁵ The United States also imports roughly 50 percent of its aluminum, which manufacturers use for basic items like beverage cans, aluminum

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² Rebecca Leppert, *5 Facts About Food Costs in America*, Pew Research Center (May 15, 2025) (www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/05/15/5-facts-about-food-costs-in-america/).

³ Katie Pryzyk, *Packaging Sector Warns 50% Tariffs on Steel and Aluminum Will Drive Up Food Costs*, FoodDive (June 4, 2025) (www.fooddive.com/news/packaging-manufacturers-tariffs-steel-aluminum-doubled/749792/).

⁴ Samantha Fields, *Trump's Steel and Aluminum Tariffs Could Drive Up Grocery Costs*, Marketplace (June 3, 2025) (www.marketplace.org/story/2025/06/03/trumps-steel-and-aluminum-tariffs-could-drive-up-grocery-costs); Kristin Popp, *NGA's Fight for Independent Grocers*, Grocery from Her Seat (www.nationalgrocers.org/foundation/women-grocers-of-america/wga-podcast/) (last visited June 4, 2025).

⁵ *Id.*

foil, and packaging.⁶ New steel and aluminum tariffs could increase store prices for items in steel cans by 9 to 15 percent, according to data released earlier this month by the Consumer Brands Association, whose members include Campbell's and Del Monte Foods.⁷ Increased costs may also coincide with decreasing revenue for retailers; an April survey found that 88 percent of Americans have changed their grocery shopping habits due to economic pressure, and more than a third of these shoppers have cut back on nonessential items.⁸

Experts have also raised concerns about the impact of tariffs on grocery operations and logistics. In a recent interview, Greg Ferrara, President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Grocers Association, asked: "What does [the imposition of tariffs] do to the price of refrigeration? What does that do to the price of store shelving and other displays?"⁹ According to Ferrara, suppliers "can't even touch" certain equipment due to price increases from tariffs.¹⁰ Analysis by the credit rating agency S&P Global underscores the harmful impact of tariffs on these types of suppliers.¹¹ For example, even prior to the latest steel and aluminum levies, refrigerator manufacturer Carrier Global Corp. and forklift manufacturer Hyster-Yale Inc. already faced potential credit downgrades related to tariffs.¹²

Information from Costco Wholesale Corporation (Costco) can help quantify potential cost increases for consumers, as well as the related consequences for employment in the grocery supply chain. In addition, because Costco is the fastest-growing retailer for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients, these data can also help explain the potential impact of increased canned foods prices on these consumers.¹³ Previous statements from Costco partially address impacts that tariffs may or may not have on prices, but these statements have not concerned the impact of potential steel and aluminum tariffs, specifically. In its most recent

⁶ *The Top Sources of U.S. Steel and Aluminum Imports*, Reuters (Feb. 10, 2025) (www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/where-does-us-get-its-steel-aluminum-2025-02-10/).

⁷ Bob Tita, *The Canned-Food Aisle is Getting Squeeze by Rising Steel Tariffs*, The Wall Street Journal (June 9, 2025) (www.wsj.com/business/the-canned-food-aisle-is-getting-squeezed-by-rising-steel-tariffs-c478693c).

⁸ Nicolette Baker, *9 in 10 Americans Are Changing How They Shop for Groceries to Save Money — Even High Earners*, Food & Wine (Apr. 26, 2025) (www.foodandwine.com/grocery-shopping-habits-inflation-lentingtrees-survey-2025-11721837).

⁹ Popp, *supra* note 4.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *U.S. Capital Goods Companies Price In Tariff Costs To Defend Credit*, S&P Global Ratings (May 7, 2025) (www.spglobal.com/ratings/en/research/articles/250507-u-s-capital-goods-companies-price-in-tariff-costs-to-defend-credit-101622743).

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *The SNAP Evolution: Supporting Shoppers in a Changing Economy*, Numerator (May 2025) (www.numerator.com/snap).

quarterly report, Costco notes that “[g]overnment actions in various countries relating to tariffs affect the costs of some of our merchandise. The degree of our exposure is dependent on (among other things) the type of goods, rates imposed, and timing of the tariffs.”¹⁴ To date, Costco has avoided significant tariff-related price increases for consumers.¹⁵ However, Costco has planned more than \$4 billion in capital improvements during 2025.¹⁶ A recent survey published by the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond found that 47 percent of companies in its region have canceled or delayed capital expenditures, and 41 percent have adjusted hiring plans in response to tariffs.¹⁷

To aid the Joint Economic Committee – Minority in analyzing the impact of steel and aluminum tariffs, specifically, on food prices and jobs within the grocery supply chain, I request the following information:

1. A description of the supply chain disruptions or cost increases related to steel and aluminum tariffs that you anticipate, how you expect those disruptions or cost increases to vary by location, and the regions in which you anticipate the greatest disruptions or cost increases, including with respect to both food products and durable goods;
2. A description of how steel and aluminum tariffs are projected to impact the costs of private label goods specifically, including but not limited to canned foods and frozen meals, and including specific examples;
3. A description of how disruptions in your acquisition of products, inputs, or transportation associated with steel and aluminum tariffs have manifested, whether in terms of cancelled orders, modification of orders, changes in suppliers, delayed delivery, partial delivery of ordered goods, increased cost of goods, or increased transportation costs, including for both food products and durable goods;

¹⁴ Costco Wholesale Group, Quarterly Report (Form 10-Q), at 18 (June 5, 2025) (www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/909832/000090983225000033/cost-20250511.htm).

¹⁵ Connor Hart, *Costco Logs Higher Profit, Sales Despite Declining Consumer Confidence*, The Wall Street Journal (May 29, 2025) (www.wsj.com/business/earnings/costco-logs-higher-profit-sales-despite-declining-consumer-confidence-177cc293).

¹⁶ Costco Wholesale Group, Annual Report (Form 10-K), at 28 (Oct. 9, 2024) (www.sec.gov/ix?doc=/Archives/edgar/data/0000909832/000090983224000049/cost-20240901.htm).

¹⁷ Zach Edwards & Nathan Sumner, *The Impact of Tariffs on Our Region's Firms*, Regional Matters (June 3, 2025) (www.richmondfed.org/region_communities/regional_data_analysis/regional_matters/2025/impact_of_tariffs_on_regions_firms).

4. Expenses for the last five quarters related to the acquisition and maintenance of durable goods affected by steel and aluminum tariffs, including but not limited to refrigeration, lighting, shelving, and end caps, and including the estimated number of employees and/or contractors employed in the installation, transportation, and maintenance of such goods;
5. An estimate of the number of jobs your company supports directly or indirectly in the construction, manufacturing, transportation, logistics, food packaging, and food processing industries;
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Sincerely,



Margaret Wood Hassan
Ranking Member

cc: David Schweikert
Chairman

Ron Vachris
June 18, 2025
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Vice Chairman

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MARK KELLY, ARIZONA

LAURA EPSTEIN, DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

June 18, 2025

Mr. Todd Vasos
Chief Executive Officer
Dollar General Corporation
100 Mission Ridge
Goodlettsville, TN 37072

Dear Mr. Vasos:

I am writing to request information about the impact of President Trump's 50 percent steel and aluminum tariffs on your stores, suppliers, and grocery costs.¹ High grocery prices are a top economic concern for Americans,² and experts state that tariffs could significantly increase the cost of canned foods.³ Experts have also noted potential impacts from tariffs on the costs of shelving, equipment, transportation, and other inputs that grocery stores and their suppliers need to operate, which, in turn, could also lead to higher food prices for customers.⁴

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² Rebecca Leppert, *5 Facts About Food Costs in America*, Pew Research Center (May 15, 2025) (www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/05/15/5-facts-about-food-costs-in-america/).

³ Katie Pryzyk, *Packaging Sector Warns 50% Tariffs on Steel and Aluminum Will Drive Up Food Costs*, FoodDive (June 4, 2025) (www.fooddive.com/news/packaging-manufacturers-tariffs-steel-aluminum-doubled/749792/).

⁴ Samantha Fields, *Trump's Steel and Aluminum Tariffs Could Drive Up Grocery Costs*, Marketplace (June 3, 2025) (www.marketplace.org/story/2025/06/03/trumps-steel-and-aluminum-tariffs-could-drive-up-grocery-costs); Kristin Popp, *NGA's Fight for Independent Grocers*, Grocery from Her Seat (www.nationalgrocers.org/foundation/women-grocers-of-america/wga-podcast/) (last visited June 4, 2025).

⁵ *Id.*

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Experts have also raised concerns about the impact of tariffs on grocery operations and logistics. In a recent interview, Greg Ferrara, President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Grocers Association, asked: "What does [the imposition of tariffs] do to the price of refrigeration? What does that do to the price of store shelving and other displays?"⁹ According to Ferrara, suppliers "can't even touch" certain equipment due to price increases from tariffs.¹⁰ Analysis by the credit rating agency S&P Global underscores the harmful impact of tariffs on these types of suppliers.¹¹ For example, even prior to the latest steel and aluminum levies, refrigerator manufacturer Carrier Global Corp. and forklift manufacturer Hyster-Yale Inc. already faced potential credit downgrades related to tariffs.¹²

Information from Dollar General Corporation (Dollar General) can help quantify potential cost increases for consumers, as well as the related consequences for employment and the grocery supply chain, particularly given the company's focus on financially constrained customers. Previous statements from Dollar General partially address impacts that tariffs may or may not have on prices, but these statements have not concerned the impact of potential steel and aluminum tariffs, specifically. In its most recent quarterly report, Dollar General stated that "[c]urrently announced tariff rates, as well as any increases or expansions of tariff coverage affecting the products that we sell, including those that have been announced but delayed, could

⁶ *The Top Sources of U.S. Steel and Aluminum Imports*, Reuters (Feb. 10, 2025) (www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/where-does-us-get-its-steel-aluminum-2025-02-10/).

⁷ Bob Tita, *The Canned-Food Aisle is Getting Squeeze by Rising Steel Tariffs*, The Wall Street Journal (June 9, 2025) (www.wsj.com/business/the-canned-food-aisle-is-getting-squeezed-by-rising-steel-tariffs-c478693c).

⁸ Nicolette Baker, *9 in 10 Americans Are Changing How They Shop for Groceries to Save Money — Even High Earners*, Food & Wine (Apr. 26, 2025) (www.foodandwine.com/grocery-shopping-habits-inflation-lentingtrees-survey-2025-11721837).

⁹ Popp, *supra* note 4.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *U.S. Capital Goods Companies Price In Tariff Costs To Defend Credit*, S&P Global Ratings (May 7, 2025) (www.spglobal.com/ratings/en/research/articles/250507-u-s-capital-goods-companies-price-in-tariff-costs-to-defend-credit-101622743).

¹² *Id.*

have a more significant impact on our business and on our customers' budgets.”¹³ Nonetheless, the company reported strong first quarter earnings driven by customers looking for less expensive options.¹⁴ During a June 3, 2025, earnings call, Dollar General also expressed optimism about its ability to limit price increases for consumers.¹⁵ In addition, the company stated that tariffs would have a “minimal”¹⁶ impact on capital expenditures, which could involve steel in the construction process.¹⁷

To aid the Joint Economic Committee – Minority in analyzing the impact of steel and aluminum tariffs, specifically, on food prices and jobs within the grocery supply chain, I request the following information:

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3. A description of how disruptions in your acquisition of products, inputs, or transportation associated with steel and aluminum tariffs have manifested, whether in terms of cancelled orders, modification of orders, changes in suppliers, delayed delivery, partial delivery of ordered goods, increased cost of goods, or increased transportation costs, including for both food products and durable goods;
4. Expenses for the last five quarters related to the acquisition and maintenance of durable goods affected by steel and aluminum tariffs, including but not limited to refrigeration, lighting, shelving, and end caps, and including the estimated number of

¹³ Dollar General Corporation, Quarterly Report (Form 10-Q), at 19 (June 3, 2025) (www.sec.gov/ix?doc=/Archives/edgar/data/0000029534/000155837025008354/dg-20250502x10q.htm).

¹⁴ Alina Selyukh, *One Company Forecasting a Better Year Ahead? Dollar General*, NPR (June 3, 2025) (www.npr.org/2025/06/03/nx-s1-5422266/dollar-general-earnings-prices-tariffs).

¹⁵ Dollar General Corporation (DG) Q1 2025 Earnings Call Transcript, Seeking Alpha (June 3, 2025) (www.seekingalpha.com/article/4792082-dollar-general-corporation-dg-q1-2025-earnings-call-transcript).

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ Solcyré Burga, *How Doubling Tariffs on Steel and Aluminum Will Hit U.S. Businesses and Consumers*, Time (June 4, 2025) (time.com/7291234/trump-tariffs-steel-aluminum-prices-businesses/).

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 - b. The number of canned goods per SNAP transaction; and
 - c. SNAP recipients' mix of brand name and private label canned goods.

Please provide your responses as soon as possible but in no event later than July 9, 2025. If you have any questions related to this request, please contact Jacob Marx of the Committee staff at Jacob_Marx@jec.senate.gov or (202) 224-0372. Please send any official correspondence relating to this request to Jacob_Marx@jec.senate.gov.

Sincerely,



Margaret Wood Hassan
Ranking Member

cc: David Schweikert
Chairman

Eric S. Schmitt
Vice Chairman

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Congress of the United States

JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE
(CREATED PURSUANT TO SEC. 5(a) OF PUBLIC LAW 304, 79TH CONGRESS)

Washington, DC 20510-6602

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MARK KELLY, ARIZONA

LAURA EPSTEIN, DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

June 18, 2025

Mr. Ronald Sargent
Interim Chief Executive Officer and Interim Chairman
The Kroger Co.
1014 Vine Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Dear Mr. Sargent:

I am writing to request information about the impact of President Trump's 50 percent steel and aluminum tariffs on your stores, suppliers, and grocery costs.¹ High grocery prices are a top economic concern for Americans,² and experts state that tariffs could significantly increase the cost of canned foods.³ Experts have also noted potential impacts from tariffs on the costs of shelving, equipment, transportation, and other inputs that grocery stores and their suppliers need to operate, which, in turn, could also lead to higher food prices for customers.⁴

The United States imports nearly 70 percent of the steel that manufacturers use in canned fruits, vegetables, and other essential food items.⁵ The United States also imports roughly 50 percent of its aluminum, which manufacturers use for basic items like beverage cans, aluminum

¹ Ana Swanson and Ian Austen, *Higher U.S. Tariffs on Steel and Aluminum Imports Take Effect*, The New York Times (June 4, 2025) (www.nytimes.com/2025/06/04/business/economy/trump-tariffs-steel-aluminum.html).

² Rebecca Leppert, *5 Facts About Food Costs in America*, Pew Research Center (May 15, 2025) (www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/05/15/5-facts-about-food-costs-in-america/).

³ Katie Pryzyk, *Packaging Sector Warns 50% Tariffs on Steel and Aluminum Will Drive Up Food Costs*, FoodDive (June 4, 2025) (www.fooddive.com/news/packaging-manufacturers-tariffs-steel-aluminum-doubled/749792/).

⁴ Samantha Fields, *Trump's Steel and Aluminum Tariffs Could Drive Up Grocery Costs*, Marketplace (June 3, 2025) (www.marketplace.org/story/2025/06/03/trumps-steel-and-aluminum-tariffs-could-drive-up-grocery-costs); Kristin Popp, *NGA's Fight for Independent Grocers*, Grocery from Her Seat (www.nationalgrocers.org/foundation/women-grocers-of-america/wga-podcast/) (last visited June 4, 2025).

⁵ *Id.*

foil, and packaging.⁶ New steel and aluminum tariffs could increase store prices for items in steel cans by 9 to 15 percent, according to data released earlier this month by the Consumer Brands Association, whose members include Campbell's and Del Monte Foods.⁷ Increased costs may also coincide with decreasing revenue for retailers; an April survey found that 88 percent of Americans have changed their grocery shopping habits due to economic pressure, and more than a third of these shoppers have cut back on nonessential items.⁸

Experts have also raised concerns about the impact of tariffs on grocery operations and logistics. In a recent interview, Greg Ferrara, President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Grocers Association, asked: "What does [the imposition of tariffs] do to the price of refrigeration? What does that do to the price of store shelving and other displays?"⁹ According to Ferrara, suppliers "can't even touch" certain equipment due to price increases from tariffs.¹⁰ Analysis by the credit rating agency S&P Global underscores the harmful impact of tariffs on these types of suppliers.¹¹ For example, even prior to the latest steel and aluminum levies, refrigerator manufacturer Carrier Global Corp. and forklift manufacturer Hyster-Yale Inc. already faced potential credit downgrades related to tariffs.¹²

Information from the Kroger Company (Kroger) can help quantify potential cost increases for consumers, as well as the related consequences for employment in the grocery supply chain. Previous statements from Kroger partially address impacts that tariffs may or may not have on prices, but these statements have not concerned the impact of potential steel and aluminum tariffs, specifically. In its 2024 annual report, Kroger included a general disclaimer that over 30 criteria, including the state of the economy, changes in tariffs, manufacturing commodity costs, and supply constraints, could impact its profit goals.¹³ When asked by analysts

⁶ *The Top Sources of U.S. Steel and Aluminum Imports*, Reuters (Feb. 10, 2025) (www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/where-does-us-get-its-steel-aluminum-2025-02-10/).

⁷ Bob Tita, *The Canned-Food Aisle is Getting Squeeze by Rising Steel Tariffs*, The Wall Street Journal (June 9, 2025) (www.wsj.com/business/the-canned-food-aisle-is-getting-squeezed-by-rising-steel-tariffs-c478693c).

⁸ Nicolette Baker, *9 in 10 Americans Are Changing How They Shop for Groceries to Save Money — Even High Earners*, Food & Wine (Apr. 26, 2025) (www.foodandwine.com/grocery-shopping-habits-inflation-lentingtree-survey-2025-11721837).

⁹ Popp, *supra* note 4.

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ *U.S. Capital Goods Companies Price In Tariff Costs To Defend Credit*, S&P Global Ratings (May 7, 2025) (www.spglobal.com/ratings/en/research/articles/250507-u-s-capital-goods-companies-price-in-tariff-costs-to-defend-credit-101622743).

¹² *Id.*

¹³ The Kroger Company, Annual Report (Form 10-K), at 2 (filed Mar. 28, 2025) (www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/56873/000155837025004267/kr-20250201x10k.htm).

on a March 6, 2025, investor call to elaborate on the risk of tariffs, however, a Kroger executive stated: “[W]e have less exposure to some of the international tariffs that some of our peers will see. You think of China, we’re a really, really small single-digit exposure, I think, from some of the things that we buy from China.”¹⁴ One industry analyst observed that “Kroger is definitely sounding more aggressive than the rest of the industry” about expanding its operations this year.¹⁵

To aid the Joint Economic Committee – Minority in analyzing the impact of steel and aluminum tariffs, specifically, on food prices and jobs within the grocery supply chain, I request the following information:

1. A description of the supply chain disruptions or cost increases related to steel and aluminum tariffs that you anticipate, how you expect those disruptions or cost increases to vary by location, and the regions in which you anticipate the greatest disruptions or cost increases, including with respect to both food products and durable goods;
2. A description of how steel and aluminum tariffs are projected to impact the costs of private label goods specifically, including but not limited to canned foods and frozen meals, and including specific examples;
3. A description of how disruptions in your acquisition of products, inputs, or transportation associated with steel and aluminum tariffs have manifested, whether in terms of cancelled orders, modification of orders, changes in suppliers, delayed delivery, partial delivery of ordered goods, increased cost of goods, or increased transportation costs, including for both food products and durable goods;
4. Expenses for the last five quarters related to the acquisition and maintenance of durable goods affected by steel and aluminum tariffs, including but not limited to refrigeration, lighting, shelving, and end caps, and including the estimated number of employees and/or contractors employed in the installation, transportation, and maintenance of such goods;
5. An estimate of the number of jobs your company supports directly or indirectly in the construction, manufacturing, transportation, logistics, food packaging, and food processing industries;
6. For each of your top 25 canned food items and top 10 aluminum foil and storage items by sales value:

¹⁴ The Kroger Company, Q4 2024 Earnings Call Transcript, Seeking Alpha, (Mar. 6, 2025) (www.seekingalpha.com/article/4765379-the-kroger-co-kr-q4-2024-earnings-call-transcript).

¹⁵ *Id.*

- a. Total inventory cost, total revenue, and profit margin for each of the last five quarters, nationally and by metro area;
 - b. Data sufficient to show prices before and after:
 1. Tariffs in effect as of January 1, 2025;
 2. Steel and aluminum tariffs in effect as of April 5, 2025;
 3. Steel and aluminum tariffs in effect as of June 4, 2025; and
 - c. A description of the impact of steel and aluminum tariffs on these price changes and how added costs for these items, if any, are distributed through applicable supply chains; and
7. A description of the shopping patterns of SNAP recipients specific to their purchases of canned goods over the past five quarters as well as observed and expected trends with respect to:
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Margaret Wood Hassan
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MARK KELLY, ARIZONA

LAURA EPSTEIN, DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

June 18, 2025

Mr. Doug McMillon
President and Chief Executive Officer
Walmart Inc.
702 S.W. 8th Street
Bentonville, AR 72716

Dear Mr. McMillon:

I am writing to request information about the impact of President Trump's 50 percent steel and aluminum tariffs on your stores, suppliers, and grocery costs.¹ High grocery prices are a top economic concern for Americans,² and experts state that tariffs could significantly increase the cost of canned foods.³ Experts have also noted potential impacts from tariffs on the costs of shelving, equipment, transportation, and other inputs that grocery stores and their suppliers need to operate, which, in turn, could also lead to higher food prices for customers.⁴

The United States imports nearly 70 percent of the steel that manufacturers use in canned fruits, vegetables, and other essential food items.⁵ The United States also imports roughly 50 percent of its aluminum, which manufacturers use for basic items like beverage cans, aluminum

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² Rebecca Leppert, *5 Facts About Food Costs in America*, Pew Research Center (May 15, 2025) (www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/05/15/5-facts-about-food-costs-in-america/).

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⁴ Samantha Fields, *Trump's Steel and Aluminum Tariffs Could Drive Up Grocery Costs*, Marketplace (June 3, 2025) (www.marketplace.org/story/2025/06/03/trumps-steel-and-aluminum-tariffs-could-drive-up-grocery-costs); Kristin Popp, *NGA's Fight for Independent Grocers*, Grocery from Her Seat (www.nationalgrocers.org/foundation/women-grocers-of-america/wga-podcast/) (last visited June 4, 2025).

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foil, and packaging.⁶ New steel and aluminum tariffs could increase store prices for items in steel cans by 9 to 15 percent, according to data released earlier this month by the Consumer Brands Association, whose members include Campbell's and Del Monte Foods.⁷ Increased costs may also coincide with decreasing revenue for retailers; an April survey found that 88 percent of Americans have changed their grocery shopping habits due to economic pressure, and more than a third of these shoppers have cut back on nonessential items.⁸

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Information from Walmart Inc. (Walmart) can help quantify potential cost increases for consumers, as well as the related consequences for employment in the grocery supply chain. In addition, because Walmart serves the largest population of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients of any retailer, this data can also help show the impact of increased costs for canned foods on these consumers.¹³ Previous statements from Walmart partially address impacts that tariffs may or may not have on prices, but these statements have not concerned the impact of potential steel and aluminum tariffs in grocery retail, specifically. In its 2024 annual

⁶ *The Top Sources of U.S. Steel and Aluminum Imports*, Reuters (Feb. 10, 2025) (www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/where-does-us-get-its-steel-aluminum-2025-02-10/).

⁷ Bob Tita, *The Canned-Food Aisle is Getting Squeeze by Rising Steel Tariffs*, The Wall Street Journal (June 9, 2025) (www.wsj.com/business/the-canned-food-aisle-is-getting-squeezed-by-rising-steel-tariffs-c478693c).

⁸ Nicolette Baker, *9 in 10 Americans Are Changing How They Shop for Groceries to Save Money — Even High Earners*, Food & Wine (Apr. 26, 2025) (www.foodandwine.com/grocery-shopping-habits-inflation-lentingtrees-survey-2025-11721837).

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¹¹ *U.S. Capital Goods Companies Price In Tariff Costs To Defend Credit*, S&P Global Ratings (May 7, 2025) (www.spglobal.com/ratings/en/research/articles/250507-u-s-capital-goods-companies-price-in-tariff-costs-to-defend-credit-101622743).

¹² *Id.*

¹³ *The SNAP Evolution: Supporting Shoppers in a Changing Economy*, Numerator (May 2025) (www.numerator.com/snap).

report, Walmart notes that “[r]isks associated with our suppliers could materially adversely affect our financial performance... [including] the limitation on the importation of certain types of goods or of goods containing certain materials from other countries.”¹⁴ During investor calls and media appearances in May 2025, Walmart executives frequently discussed the impact of tariffs, including on imported produce, but do not appear to have faced questions about canned foods or durables within the grocery supply chain.¹⁵

To aid the Joint Economic Committee – Minority in analyzing the impact of steel and aluminum tariffs, specifically, on food prices and jobs within the grocery supply chain, I request the following information:

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¹⁴ Walmart Inc., Annual Report (Form 10-K), at 17 (Mar. 28, 2019) (www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/104169/000010416919000016/wmtform10-kx1312019.htm).

¹⁵ Walmart Inc., Q1 2026 Earnings Call Transcript (May 15, 2025) (stock.walmart.com/assets/fd2070d53220eed6fac33d073cf0a0e6/walmart/db/938/9953/transcript_management_call/Q1+2026+Earnings+Call.pdf); Walmart Inc., Q1 FY26 Buyside Investor Call Transcript (May 16, 2025) (stock.walmart.com/assets/fd2070d53220eed6fac33d073cf0a0e6/walmart/db/938/9953/transcript_buy_side_follow_up_call/Q1+FY26+Buyside+Investor+Call.pdf); Yahoo Finance, *Trump Tariffs Set to Unleash Double-Digit Price Increases in Some Walmart Departments: CFO* (May 15, 2025) (finance.yahoo.com/news/trump-tariffs-set-to-unleash-double-digit-price-increases-in-some-walmart-departments-cfo-151615476.html).

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