

US moves to push global trade deal on green goods

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US trade representative Michael Froman speaks during a press conference in Singapore on February 25, 2014

The United States said Friday it was planning to begin negotiations with other leading trading countries for a deal to cut tariffs for green goods like solar panels.

The office of the US Trade Representative said it had officially notified Congress of the plan to open talks for a new pact on [environmental goods](#) under the World Trade Organization.

"By eliminating tariffs on the environmental technologies we need to keep our air and water clean, for example, we can make them cheaper and more accessible to everyone," said US Trade Representative Michael Froman.

"An agreement on environmental goods can make an important contribution to the domestic and international environmental protection agenda."

Earlier this year the US reached agreement with 13 other WTO members to launch talks on a trade pact for environmental goods.

The category includes renewable and [clean energy technologies](#), wastewater treatment and [air pollution control](#) technologies, and assessment equipment like air and water quality monitors.

The 13 plus the United States account for 86 percent of the \$1 trillion annual global trade in environmental goods.

The others are Australia, Canada, China, Costa Rica, the European Union, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, Switzerland and Taiwan.

The USTR office said tariffs on green goods can be as much as 35 percent in some countries.

The US National Foreign Trade Council announced its support for the talks.

"This initiative is a bit of mom-and-apple-pie. It's good for economic growth and for the environment, and we hope it will be a priority for negotiators in Geneva," said Jake Colvin, NFTC Vice President for Global Trade Issues.

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