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## Trump Administration Unveils NAFTA Negotiating Objectives Ahead of First Round of Talks

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This week, the Trump Administration took a major step forward in laying the groundwork for the upcoming renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). On July 17, the Office of the US Trade Representative (USTR) released a summary of the Administration's [negotiating objectives](#) for the upcoming NAFTA talks.

Under Section 105 of Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) legislation passed into law in 2015, the Administration is required to publish a detailed and comprehensive summary of the specific objectives with respect to the negotiations, and a description of how the agreement, if successfully concluded, will further these objectives and benefit the United States at least 30 calendar days before initiating formal trade negotiations.

Most notably, USTR's summary is framed as an overall renegotiation of NAFTA, and does not simply focus on those areas where the Administration is seeking changes to the existing deal. The [negotiating objectives](#) covered a wide range of topics, including trade in goods and services, labor and environment, trade facilitation, trade remedies, and dispute settlement. According to the summary, the Administration also plans to use upcoming NAFTA talks to address the United States' trade deficit in goods with Canada and Mexico.

Upon release of the negotiating objectives, US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer stated that "[t]oo many Americans have been hurt by closed factories, exported jobs, and broken political promises. Under President Trump's leadership, USTR will negotiate a fair deal. We will seek to address America's persistent trade imbalances, break down trade barriers, and give Americans new opportunities to grow their exports. President Trump is reclaiming American prosperity and making our country great again."

On July 19, USTR confirmed the first round of NAFTA discussions will be held [August 16-20](#) in Washington, DC. USTR also announced John Melle, Assistant US Trade Representative for the Western Hemisphere, will serve as the United States' Chief Negotiator.

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