April 24, 2018

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington DC 20500

Mr. President:

On behalf of the Aluminum Association and the full value chain of the U.S. aluminum industry that it represents, I am grateful for your attention to this vital industry. I was glad to join industry leaders in the Oval Office one year ago when you announced an investigation into the national security impacts of aluminum imports. As you continue to evaluate and implement the Section 232 remedy, I urge you to grant permanent exemptions – without quotas – for our aluminum trading partners that operate as market economies. I also encourage you to engage China to address structural aluminum overcapacity.

The association’s member companies share the belief that China’s market-distorting behavior drives massive overcapacity in both primary aluminum production and downstream products. Now that the United States is at a major turning point in trade negotiations with China, we see a historic opportunity for you to address this persistent problem once and for all.

Equally important is to bolster the tremendous innovation and growth fueled by longstanding integration and established supply chains – particularly within North America. The United States consumes more than 5 million metric tons of primary aluminum each year but has less than 2 million metric tons of primary smelting capacity, and building new smelters is a time- and capital-intensive process. Fully 97 percent of U.S. aluminum industry jobs are in mid- and downstream production and most rely in some way on imported metal. We strongly believe that the Section 232 aluminum remedy should not disrupt current trading relationships with responsible trading partners. Any quotas on these key partners will only further distort the market, particularly if new sanctions on Russian aluminum lead to tightened supply conditions. Quotas would paradoxically cause imports of semi-fabricated products from China to be more competitive in the U.S. market, as manufacturers scramble to find metal.

The U.S. aluminum industry is a bright spot for manufacturing, with all indicators pointing to record demand in 2017 and robust growth in the years ahead. We are eager to work with you to tackle the real trade and regulatory barriers that are impeding the growth of primary aluminum production, many of which were identified in the Section 232 report on aluminum. In the meantime, focusing the Section 232 aluminum remedy on Chinese overcapacity is the best way to support our country’s economic strength, national security and jobs.

Respectfully,

Heidi Brock
President and CEO