

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

November 30, 2016

Mr. Andrew McGilvray  
Executive Secretary  
Foreign-Trade Zone Board  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave., NW Room 21013  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Mr. McGilvray:

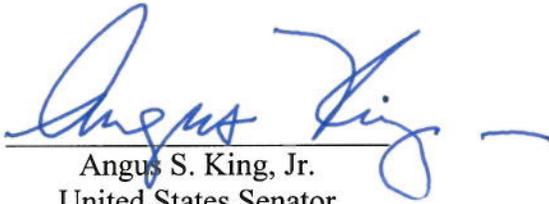
We write to express our support for Flemish Master Weavers' (FMW) recent appeal to the Foreign Trade Zone Board for production authority to manufacture area rugs at FTZ 186, subzone 186A. A strong manufacturing industry is essential to Maine's future, and securing fair trade regulations for Maine-based companies is of critical importance to our communities and economy.

Flemish Master Weavers is a Maine manufacturer of machine-made woven area rugs and is the smallest of four such producers in the United States. The company competes for market share with foreign manufacturers who increasingly dominate the domestic area rug market. To remain competitive, FMW imports continuous filament polypropylene yarn, a material carrying a U.S. tariff of eight percent. Despite efforts to adjust to a changing market, FMW still faces an uphill battle as foreign area rug competitors enjoy duty-free access to the United States for area rugs made in foreign factories with identical yarn. In other words, foreign rugs with the same yarn come in with no U.S. tariff, while FMW's ability to make the rugs in America is stymied by a U.S. tariff on yarn imports. The end result is that American jobs are, ironically, threatened by a tariff designed to protect them. Inverted tariff relief through production authority is needed to ensure that U.S. tariff policy is not putting FMW at a disadvantage relative to foreign area rug producers.

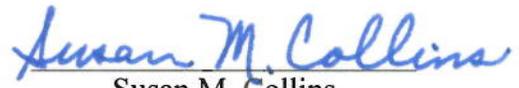
Flemish Master Weavers employs 127 people in Sanford, Maine, and is one of Southern Maine's largest manufacturing employers. With 11 high speed looms, fully automated packing, and finishing operations, FMW provides meaningful employment to its workers in Maine, helping them to maintain and improve their financial stability. Approval of the FTZ application would not only increase competitiveness, but set the company on a track to expand operations. The company has stated its interest in a 72,000 square foot building expansion and the addition of two new looms and four replacement looms, which could potentially increase employment from 127 to 170 jobs.

We request your careful consideration of this matter, subject to all applicable laws, regulations, and guidelines, and ask that you please notify Lauren Pfingstag at [Lauren\\_Pfingstag@king.senate.gov](mailto:Lauren_Pfingstag@king.senate.gov), Phillips Hinch at [Phillips\\_Hinch@collins.senate.gov](mailto:Phillips_Hinch@collins.senate.gov), Evan Johnston at [Evan.Johnston@mail.house.gov](mailto:Evan.Johnston@mail.house.gov), and Michael Sinacore at [Michael.Sinacore@mail.house.gov](mailto:Michael.Sinacore@mail.house.gov) when a final decision has been made.

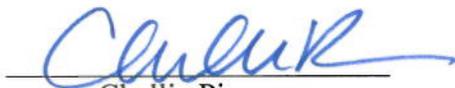
Sincerely,



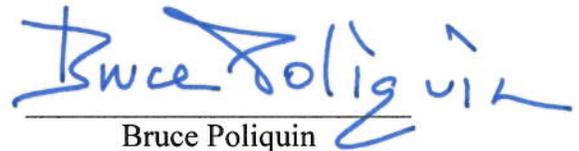
Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins  
United States Senator



Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress



Bruce Poliquin  
Member of Congress