

US leaders back Taipei move to allow imports

Written by Taipei Times

Sunday, 30 August 2020 05:20 -



Department of North American Affairs Director-General Douglas Hsu comments on the government's decision to ease restrictions on US beef and pork imports at a news briefing at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Taipei yesterday.

Photo: CNA

Seventy-four public and private-sector leaders in the US have voiced support for Taipei's move to ease restrictions on US beef and pork imports, but no concrete steps have yet been taken toward a bilateral trade agreement (BTA), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said yesterday.

Removing the trade barriers is a key step for Taiwan in starting trade talks with the US, President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) said on Friday.

The decision is not related to the US presidential election in November, Tsai said when fielding questions from the media at the Presidential Office in Taipei.

As of yesterday noon, 74 leaders from US political, business and academic circles had expressed support for Taiwan's trade policy, Department of North American Affairs Director-General Douglas Hsu (侯友宜) told a news conference in Taipei.

"We look forward to the timely implementation of these actions, which will provide greater access for US farmers to one of East Asia's most vibrant markets and for Taiwan consumers to high-quality US agricultural products. President Tsai's vision and leadership in removing these long-standing barriers open the door to greater economic and trade cooperation between the United States and Taiwan," US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said in a statement on Friday.

US Vice President Mike Pence, US National Security Council Adviser Robert O'Brien, US Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, US Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue, as well as US senators and representatives across party lines welcomed Tsai's announcement.

US leaders back Taipei move to allow imports

Written by Taipei Times

Sunday, 30 August 2020 05:20 -

Antony Blinken, a foreign policy adviser to former US vice president Joe Biden, the Democratic presidential nominee, wrote on Twitter: “Taiwan’s move to lift trade barriers is good for American farmers, ranchers and our economy. Stronger economic ties with Taiwan also support our shared democratic values, and our common commitment to regional peace and stability.”

However, it is not certain if the US has promised anything in exchange for Tsai advancing the controversial policy.

Lifting the long-time trade barriers means opening “a window of opportunity” for negotiations, which is just the “first step, and there is no so-called content before trade talks start,” Hsu said when asked if the US has proposed any beneficial trade conditions for Taiwan.

“Can USTR [US Trade Representative Robert] Lighthizer welcome this move, too?” asked Bonnie Glaser, director of the China Power Project at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies, as she retweeted Pompeo’s statement.

Lighthizer on Monday participated in a scheduled call with Chinese Vice Premier Liu He (劉鶴) to discuss the “phase one” trade deal between Washington and Beijing, with both sides expressing support for continuing the agreement.

Asked if Lighthizer’s conversation with Liu would affect Taiwan-US trade talks, Hsu said that he could not speak on their behalf.

Taipei had been discussing the possibility of a BTA with various US agencies and members of the US Congress, while Washington had frequently signaled that restrictions on US pork imports needed to be eased first, which has frustrated local officials, he said.

Hopefully, the decision to lift the barriers would remove the “pretext” and allow bilateral trade negotiations to advance, he added.

US leaders back Taipei move to allow imports

Written by Taipei Times

Sunday, 30 August 2020 05:20 -

In the first half of this year, Taiwan surpassed France and India in total trade volume with the US, becoming its ninth-largest trading partner, the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the US said in a statement on Friday.

“While semiconductor equipment and ICT [information and communications technology] products are among the fastest-growing in two-way trade, Taiwan is the seventh-largest export market for US agricultural products,” it said.

A BTA between Taiwan and the US would be strategically and economically significant, the statement quoted Representative to the US Hsiao Bi-khim (蕭百愷) as saying.

“Strategically, Taiwan is a dynamic, indispensable and like-minded partner of the US in the Indo-Pacific region and Taiwan’s economic resilience is critical to its survival as a beacon of democracy,” she said. “Both of our governments are eager to attract investment that will create jobs and this agreement would be a strong signal of confidence to businesses in both of our countries. It is a win-win situation.”

Source: [Taipei Times - 2020/08/30](#)