

April 23, 2025

Tim Cook
Chief Executive Officer
Apple Inc.
1 Apple Park Way
Cupertino, CA 95014

Dear Mr. Cook:

I write regarding my concerns about the extent to which you “went to work behind the scenes”¹ to obtain special exemptions from President Trump’s new tariffs earlier this month. I have already raised concerns that President Trump’s “trade policy is becoming a corrupt scheme to enrich administration officials and those loyal to them,” and the circumstances surrounding Apple’s exemptions raise fresh concerns about influence-peddling by huge well-connected corporations, and their ability to gain special favors from President Trump.²

On April 8, 2025, President Trump announced additional tariffs on Chinese imports,³ which would have driven up costs on goods produced in China—including many of your electronics. Had the tariffs been applied, it is estimated that they would have increased the cost of iPhones to \$2,000 per phone.⁴ In the wake of President Trump’s initial announcement, Apple’s stock dropped by 7.65%—having already fallen by over 15% since Trump’s “Liberation Day.”⁵ The President repeatedly indicated that there would be no exemptions on these tariffs.⁶ Even before the tariff announcement, Apple appeared to have invested heavily in influencing the Trump Administration, making a million-dollar contribution to President Trump’s inaugural committee.⁷ You personally journeyed to Washington, D.C. to sit with the president’s family and

¹ Washington Post, “How Tim Cook helped Apple out of Trump’s tariff storm — for now,” Jeff Stein, Elizabeth Dwoskin, and Cat Zakrzewski, April 17, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/04/17/apple-iphone-tariff-exemption-trump/>.

² Letter to Secretaries Lutnick and Bessent and Ambassador Greer, Senator Elizabeth Warren, April 16, 2025, <https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/corruption.pdf>.

³ CNN, “Trump announces 90-day pause on ‘reciprocal’ tariffs with exception of China,” Elisabeth Buchwald and Kevin Liptak, April 9, 2025, <https://www.cnn.com/2025/04/09/business/reciprocal-tariff-pause-trump/index.html>.

⁴ Washington Post, “How Tim Cook helped Apple out of Trump’s tariff storm — for now,” Jeff Stein, Elizabeth Dwoskin, and Cat Zakrzewski, April 17, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/04/17/apple-iphone-tariff-exemption-trump/>.

⁵ Yahoo Finance, “Apple Inc,” access April 21, 2025, <https://finance.yahoo.com/quote/AAPL/history/>.

⁶ CBS News, “Trump says there are no tariff exceptions in his trade war, despite electronics exemptions,” Aimee Picchi, April 14, 2025, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-tariffs-exceptions-exemption-china-electronics-apple/>.

⁷ Axios, “Scoop: Apple CEO Tim Cook donates \$1 million to Trump inauguration,” Mike Allen, January 3, 2025, <https://www.axios.com/2025/01/03/tim-cook-apple-donate-1-million-trump-inauguration>.

cabinet nominees on the dais at his inauguration. And new reports indicate the extent to which you and Apple “went to work” to receive special carve-outs.⁸

During his first term, Donald Trump’s tariff policy became a feeding frenzy for big corporations to secure lucrative exemptions and special treatment. Your company was no stranger to this process; in 2020, you successfully lobbied President Trump for tariff exclusions on some of your China-made products, from computer parts to the Apple Watch.⁹

According to the Washington Post, when the April 12 tariffs were announced by President Trump, you almost immediately “went to work behind the scenes,” using your “very good relationship” with President Trump and the Administration,¹⁰ contacting top Administration officials, and ultimately, successfully obtaining massive tariff carve-outs that President Trump himself noted, “helped Tim Cook ... and that whole business.”¹¹

Specifically, on April 12, the Trump Administration announced that it would exempt numerous electronic products from the roughly 145% tariff rate on goods produced in China.¹² This exemption applied to a number of products your company manufactures in China, including iPhones. Indeed, while the exemptions did not specifically name your company, “Apple appears to be the only company that benefits from virtually all of [them].”¹³ And other key tech products that are not sold by Apple – such as video game systems – did not receive the exemptions. Apple’s stock subsequently regained a significant portion of the value it had lost in the wake of Trump’s announcement of his so-called “reciprocal” tariffs.¹⁴

At best, your work to eliminate the tariffs on Apple products, and President Trump’s subsequent decision to exempt certain Apple products, creates the appearance of impropriety. However, recent reporting also raises serious questions about the extent to which it is possible for massive corporate special interests to use their money and influence to secure tariff exemptions that are unavailable to Main Street small businesses.

In light of these reports, we write to request more information about your attempts to influence Trump Administration officials.

⁸ Washington Post, “How Tim Cook helped Apple out of Trump’s tariff storm — for now,” Jeff Stein, Elizabeth Dwoskin, and Cat Zakrzewski, April 17, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/04/17/apple-iphone-tariff-exemption-trump/>.

⁹ New York Times, “Trump Administration Gives Apple More Tariff Relief,” Jack Nicas, March 23, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/23/technology/apple-watch-tariffs.html>.

¹⁰ Washington Post, “How Tim Cook helped Apple out of Trump’s tariff storm — for now,” Jeff Stein, Elizabeth Dwoskin, and Cat Zakrzewski, April 17, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/04/17/apple-iphone-tariff-exemption-trump/>.

¹¹ Washington Post, “How Tim Cook helped Apple out of Trump’s tariff storm — for now,” Jeff Stein, Elizabeth Dwoskin, and Cat Zakrzewski, April 17, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/04/17/apple-iphone-tariff-exemption-trump/>.

¹² CNN, “Smartphones and computers are now exempt from Trump’s latest tariffs,” Auzinea Bacon, April 12, 2025, <https://www.cnn.com/2025/04/12/tech/trump-electronics-china-tariffs/index.html>.

¹³ Washington Post, “How Tim Cook helped Apple out of Trump’s tariff storm — for now,” Jeff Stein, Elizabeth Dwoskin, and Cat Zakrzewski, April 17, 2025, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2025/04/17/apple-iphone-tariff-exemption-trump/>.

¹⁴ Yahoo Finance, “Apple Inc,” access April 21, 2025, <https://finance.yahoo.com/quote/AAPL/history/>.

- (1) What was the nature of your discussions with Trump Administration officials with regard to proposed tariffs?
 - a. Specifically, did you or any other Apple official make any commitments with regard to business or campaign matters related to Trump Administration actions on tariffs?
 - b. Did you make any commitments with regard to financial matters that could affect President Trump or his family?
 - c. Did you make any commitments with regard to political support, including campaign or campaign-related contributions, to President Trump or to other candidates?
- (2) Please provide information on any meetings or conversations (including via telephone or email) that you or anyone acting as an agent of you or Apple had with Trump Administration officials about tariffs prior to the April 12 announcement? Please include information on:
 - a. The date of these meetings.
 - b. The matters discussed during these meetings.
 - c. The outcome of these meetings.
- (3) When did Apple find out about the tariff exemptions announced by President Trump on April 12?
 - a. Who in the Administration provided this information to Apple, and who at Apple received this information?
 - b. What action did Apple officials take to prevent insider trading on this information?
- (4) What is the value of the additional profits that Apple will obtain as a result of President Trump's tariff exemption? Please explain your process for determining this estimate.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator