U.S. Releases its Summary of Objectives for the NAFTA Renegotiations

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Like any good negotiator, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, in setting out U.S. objectives for the renegotiation of NAFTA, offered only a glimpse of what the U.S. actually will be pushing for when three-country talks among Canada, Mexico and the United States begin in Washington, DC, on August 16. The U.S. statute that gives the President the authority to have a trade agreement voted up or down as a whole in Congress, without potentially deal-killing amendments, required Lighthizer to publish a statement of U.S. negotiating objectives 30 days in advance of the commencement of negotiations.

The U.S. Negotiating Objectives, taking the form of a 17-page document covering more than 20 topics, offer some reassurance to those hoping for constructive talks intended to modernize rather than tear up NAFTA. This no doubt reflects the input of significant segments of U.S. industry and agriculture that have expressed their fears about what destruction of NAFTA would mean for the U.S. economy. The Administration's press release accompanying the U.S. Negotiating Objectives notes that USTR received more than 12,000 written comments and heard from more than 140 witnesses during three days of public hearings.

To read the full alert, click on the PDF linked below.

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