

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO



Dear Members,

Staying Busy: The Council has maintained a full pace of activity across Southeast Asia and Washington. During the week of July 20–24, I led our Cambodia Business Mission, while Vice President for Technology and Finance Mario Masaya led our Digital Economy Mission to Indonesia in Jakarta. Earlier in the month, Executive Vice President Marc Mealy was also in the region advancing the Council's engagement with key stakeholders.

Our teams in Washington and across Southeast Asia have likewise increased the tempo of member programming. During the final week of July, our Washington office hosted Indonesian Ambassador Indroyono Soesilo on July 28, USABC Strategic Advisor and former Assistant U.S. Trade Representative Barbara Weisel for a discussion on U.S. trade policy on July 29, and a multi-speaker forum on Energy Security and Resilience on July 30.

We are grateful for the strong engagement and continued support of our member companies, whose participation continues to make these missions, events, and policy dialogues successful.

**Best Regards,
Brian**



ADVOCACY
UPDATE**ADVOCACY WINS IN THE PHILIPPINES****EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 119 ON DATA CLASSIFICATION AND RESIDENCY**

A significant advocacy success with the issuance of the Philippines' Executive Order No. 119 on Data Classification and Residency. Signed by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on July 13, it incorporates two key recommendations advanced by USABC during consultations with the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT). First, it removes the mandatory Tier III and Tier IV data center infrastructure requirements contained in earlier drafts, aligning instead with the Council's recommendation for outcome-based security standards. Second, it eliminates the proposed restriction limiting cross-border transfers of Top Secret and Secret government data to cryptographic format only, addressing concerns raised by USABC regarding disaster recovery and business continuity. USABC has already provided members with advance notice and analysis of the new policy and will continue engaging Philippine authorities as implementing guidelines are developed over the next 120 days, with a focus on ensuring practical, risk-based rules for offshore storage approvals, cybersecurity standards, and disaster recovery. This outcome reflects the value of sustained member-driven advocacy and collaboration with coalition partners to help shape a more workable digital policy environment in the Philippines.

*Meeting with DICT Secretary Henry Aguda during
our 2025 Philippines Business Mission*

**CLARIFICATION OF CREDITABLE WITHHOLDING TAX (CWT) ON TOP WITHHOLDING AGENTS**

In an area where I've been personally engaged since 2023, USABC secured a milestone policy advocacy win following the Philippine Government's implementation of reforms to the creditable withholding tax (CWT) regime for the wholesale distribution of motor vehicles, pharmaceutical products, and fuels. On July 20, 2026, the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) issued a Revenue Memorandum Circular that clarifies application of the reduced CWT rate, from 1% to 0.5% for certain sectors, resulting in reduced withholding exceeding \$100 million as a whole. By lowering the withholding tax rate and providing the necessary implementation certainty, these reforms enable qualified companies to fully realize the intended benefits of the policy, strengthen business liquidity, and further enhance the Philippines' competitiveness as an investment destination.

*Meeting with Finance Secretary Ralph Recto during
our 2025 Philippines Business Mission*

JULY EVENTS
USABC MISSIONS**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE MISSION**

On **July 29–30**, USABC led a delegation of leading U.S. agribusinesses to Hanoi for its 2026 Food and Agriculture Industry Mission. High-level meetings were held with key officials from the Government of Vietnam, including Ministry of Agriculture and Environment, Vietnam Food Administration under the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Finance, and Committee on Economic and Financial Affairs of the National Assembly of Vietnam. The delegation also engaged with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

**DIGITAL ECONOMY MISSION TO INDONESIA**

From **July 21 to 22**, VP Mario Masaya led USABC's 2026 Digital Economy Mission to Indonesia, featuring nine companies from the ICT, financial services, and advisory services sectors. Discussions highlighted the importance of trusted AI ecosystems, cybersecurity resiliency and online safety, secure digital infrastructure and connectivity, and cross-border data flows. The delegation held nine bilateral meetings with key ICT and financial services senior officials, including Vice Minister of Communication and Digital Affairs Nezar Patria. In addition to bilateral engagements, USABC organized an inter-ministerial dialogue, highlighting the importance of a whole-of-government approach to modernizing Indonesia's digital economy and identified opportunities for continued cooperation.

**CAMBODIA BUSINESS MISSION**

I was glad to lead our 2026 Cambodia Business Mission on **July 21–22**, bringing a delegation of leading U.S. companies to Phnom Penh for high-level engagements with Prime Minister Hun Manet, Senate President Hun Sen, and senior Royal Government officials. Co-led by USABC Board Vice Chair Greg Walters of SC Johnson, the mission reaffirmed the U.S. private sector's long-term commitment to Cambodia's development and explored opportunities to expand trade, investment, and public-private collaboration in support of the country's Pentagonal Strategy. I found the Cambodian Government very responsive: one of our companies requested help registering a new healthcare-related product and received the needed permission one week later. Other tangible commercial outcomes concerned consumer products, advanced weather technology, and manufacturing. I was glad to have a 10-minute pull-aside with Prime Minister Hun Manet after our larger meeting, where I underlined key company issues, and he responded favorably.

JULY EVENTS

MEETINGS & DISCUSSIONS



MEETING WITH INDONESIAN VICE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY

On **July 27**, USABC met with the Indonesian Vice Minister of Industry, Faisol Riza, for a second bi-monthly meeting focused on import policy implementation and supply chain resilience across a range of industrial sectors, particularly to discuss challenges related to standardization requirements and reliable access to raw materials and production inputs. The discussion, part of a series of follow up meetings after the October 2025 Business Mission to Indonesia, underscored the importance of continued government-industry cooperation to support production continuity, strengthen domestic manufacturing, and enhance Indonesia's long-term industrial competitiveness.

APEC BRIEFING

On **July 15**, the Council hosted a hybrid briefing on "APEC Vietnam 2027 – Insights, Priorities, and Business Engagement," in collaboration with the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The briefing featured Casey Mace, U.S. Senior Official to APEC at the State Department's Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs, who outlined U.S. priorities for APEC 2027 in Vietnam, including areas where the United States aims to advance tangible policy outcomes and strengthen business engagement. Members were encouraged to engage early to help Vietnam shape priorities for APEC 2027 and align their engagement with the agenda, particularly in areas such as AI, support for MSMEs, and supply chain connectivity.



APEC Vietnam 2027

Insights, Priorities, and Business Engagement



HYBRID EVENT

IN-PERSON: US-ASEAN BUSINESS COUNCIL



MEETING WITH THE HALAL PRODUCT ASSURANCE AGENCY (BPJPH)

On **July 4**, USABC convened a consultative dialogue with Dr. H. Ahmad Haikal Hassan, Head of Indonesia's Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH), to follow up on the Council's recommendations regarding key regulatory and implementation priorities ahead of the full implementation of Indonesia's halal product assurance requirements in October 2026. The discussion provided members with an opportunity to engage directly with BPJPH leadership on implementation readiness, requirements for non-food and imported products, non-halal labeling, recognition of foreign halal certification bodies, and proposed revisions to regulations covering materials exempt from halal certification and product categories subject to mandatory certification.

JULY EVENTS

DISCUSSIONS & ROUNDTABLES



ICT REGULATION UPDATE WITH MARIO MASAYA

On **July 24**, the Council hosted an in-person ICT advocacy discussion in Jakarta led by Mario Masaya, USABC's Vice President for Research, Technology, and Financial Services. The session provided members with an update on the rapidly evolving digital policy landscape in Indonesia, covering developments in AI governance, data governance, cybersecurity legislation, copyright law revisions, and other cross-sector ICT regulatory issues. Participants also discussed the Council's advocacy priorities and strategy, helping to shape ongoing engagement with policymakers and advance a coordinated approach to digital policy across Southeast Asia.



ICT ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

On **July 15**, USABC convened the first session of its 2026 ICT Roundtable Discussion Series, titled "Indonesia's AI Governance Landscape—Coordination, Opportunities, and Roadmap," featuring remarks from the Ministry of Communication and Digital Affairs (MCDA), Ministry of Law, Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Cultural Affairs, the Legislative Body (Baleg) of the House of Representatives (DPR RI), and the National Economic Council. The roundtable examined Indonesia's emerging AI governance framework, the intersection of AI and copyright protection, and AI implementation across Indonesia's public sector, highlighting the importance of regulatory coordination, legal clarity, and an enabling environment for innovation.



VIETNAM MOIT MEETING

On **July 16**, USABC welcomed a senior Vietnamese government delegation to Washington for a high-level business roundtable held alongside ongoing U.S.-Vietnam trade negotiations. Led by Minister of Industry and Trade Le Manh Hung, the delegation engaged directly with member companies on strengthening the bilateral economic partnership and expanding opportunities for U.S. investment in Vietnam. Discussions underscored Vietnam's commitment to building a more transparent, predictable, and investor-friendly business environment while advancing cooperation in strategic sectors including semiconductors, artificial intelligence, high-tech manufacturing, energy, digital trade, logistics, and sustainable supply chains.

JULY EVENTS
DISCUSSIONS & ROUNDTABLES**UPDATE ON U.S. TRADE POLICY AND S.E.A.
WITH BARBARA WEISEL**

On **July 29th**, USABC's Special Advisor Barbara Weisel met with Council members to discuss US trade policy and US-ASEAN economic relations. The briefing included an overview of the status of USTR's Section 301 investigations and the current situation of Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) talks with Vietnam, Thailand and the Philippines. Two takeaways from the discussion include: There is a potential scenario where the differential of US import taxes on goods made in China versus made in ASEAN countries is significantly reduced this year; and current US trade policy formulation processes have reduced opportunities for US private sector stakeholder consultation.

**ENERGY SECURITY AND NEW
DEMAND IN THE AI ERA**

On July 30th USABC convened a roundtable on "Powering Southeast Asia's Future: Energy Security, Resilience, and New Demand in the AI Era." Participants examined how geopolitical disruptions, supply-chain vulnerabilities, and rapidly rising electricity demand from AI, data centers, and advanced manufacturing are reshaping Southeast Asia's energy priorities. The discussion explored measures to strengthen resilience through diversified fuel supplies, strategic stockpiles, regional power connectivity, demand management, and investment in renewable energy, natural gas, nuclear power, and other emerging technologies. Speakers also considered how governments can balance energy security, affordability, and sustainability while developing stable regulatory frameworks and mobilizing development finance and private capital. One takeaway is that USABC plans to cooperate closely with the Government of Japan on energy-related programs in the ASEAN region.

**BRIEFING WITH INDONESIAN
AMBASSADOR H.E. INDROYONO
SOESILO**

On July 28, USABC hosted Indonesian Ambassador H.E. Indroyono Soesilo, his team from the Embassy of Indonesia, and the Indonesia Investment Promotion Center (IIPC) New York, for a briefing on recent economic developments in Indonesia and the country's investment climate. The discussion covered developments towards ART implementation, trade policy, and business operations challenges.

USABC
INSTITUTE UPDATES

WEBINAR: DNA IDENTIFICATION OF MISSING PERSONS AND COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

On **June 24**, the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi and USABCI co-hosted a webinar on Vietnam's humanitarian and scientific initiatives and the commercial opportunities they present. The Embassy outlined the Vietnamese Government's strategic priorities and the ICMP DNA Identification of Human Remains project, while USABCI briefed participants on VWAI sub-grant opportunities. The session was joined by USABCI Board members and private sector representatives, including those from QIAGEN and Illumina.

USABCI SECURED NEW PRIVATE-SECTOR CONTRIBUTIONS FOR VIETNAM WARTIME ACCOUNTING INITIATIVE (VWAI)

USABCI secured approximately US\$330,000 in private-sector contributions in Q2 2026, anchored by two significant corporate commitments. The first came from QIAGEN, a leading DNA technology company with major operations in Germantown, Maryland, which confirmed a US\$194,312 donation toward the purchase of the MiSeq FGx Sequencing System including the workflow and training. Lockheed Martin provided the second commitment, contributing US\$30,000 toward DNA capacity-building while also engaging in dialogue on flight safety in remote and hazardous terrain. Representatives of both companies joined the USG-supported VWAI delegation to Vietnam in June. Since the program's inception, USABCI has provided a total of US\$125,000 in matching grants and approximately \$180,000 remains in grant funds.

INDONESIA OFFICE MID YEAR SUMMARY

Our Indonesia team provided this H1 2026 update: It has been a productive first half of 2026 as the Indonesia office organized 32 meetings with government officials at the Deputy and Assistant Deputy Minister levels, delivered six special projects, conducted three member events, and executed two industry-focused missions during the first half of 2026. These activities supported member engagement on policy developments, operational challenges, tariffs, geopolitical and economic trends, and sector-specific business issues. The Council also advanced 12 advocacy priorities and engaged more than 30 stakeholders across government institutions, business associations, think tanks, international organizations, and media. A notable advocacy win was the issuance of Government Regulation No. 21 of 2026 on Natural Resource Export Proceeds (DHE SDA), which addressed concerns raised by the mining sector regarding the mandatory placement of export proceeds in state-owned banks. Under Article 18A, eligible mining exporters conducting transactions with countries that have bilateral agreements with Indonesia, including the United States, China, Australia, and Canada, may repatriate 30 % of export proceeds for a three-month period. The regulation also allows these funds to be placed in designated foreign-exchange accounts other than the state-owned banks (himbara).

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE — BUNDLED PRICING

As part of our commitment to making engagement with USABC as seamless as possible, we are developing a new optional bundled pricing model that will allow members to consolidate their annual participation into a single invoice. Under this approach, companies can earmark funding for flagship USABC programming while also establishing a flexible credit fund that can be applied to sponsorship opportunities throughout the year, such as roundtables, dinners, and other special events. The goal is to reduce administrative burdens, simplify budgeting, and help member companies avoid the need to seek multiple internal approvals for individual sponsorships and programs. We are currently planning the 2027 calendar and participation opportunities and will share additional details as they are finalized.

Benefits for Members:

- One annual invoice instead of multiple invoices throughout the year.
- Simplified budgeting with a single annual commitment for engagement activities.
- Dedicated funding for flagship USABC programs and key regional initiatives.
- Flexible sponsorship credits that can be used for select roundtables, dinners, and other one-off opportunities as they arise.
- Fewer internal approval cycles, reducing administrative workload for membership, government affairs, and finance teams.
- Greater visibility into annual engagement planning and participation opportunities.
- A more streamlined and efficient partnership experience with USABC.

If you have any questions or would like to meet with our Membership team to begin organizing a bundled engagement package for your company, please contact Andrew Koch at akoch@usasean.org.

**UPCOMING
EVENTS & UPDATES****THE BOTTOM LINE
WITH USABC****BOTTOM LINE WITH USABC: LINDSEY FORD**

In the latest episode of The Bottom Line with USABC, President & CEO Ambassador Brian McFeeters sat down with Lindsey Ford, Adjunct Senior Fellow, Indo-Pacific Security Program at Center for New America Security (CNAS), Vice President, Beacon Global Strategies. Together, they unpacked the state of the U.S.-ASEAN defense and security relationship and what it means for American businesses, China's pressure in the South China Sea, and opportunities and pitfalls in the Aerospace, Defense, and Security space. Check out the podcast here and subscribe to our YouTube channel [here](#).

PHILIPPINES BUSINESS MISSION

CONTACT: aortega@usasean.org

The Council's annual Philippines Business Mission will take place in Manila from **August 18-20**, bringing senior executives together with Philippine government leaders and key stakeholders to advance the U.S.-Philippines economic partnership. Coinciding with the 80th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries, the mission will focus on strengthening public-private collaboration in support of the Philippines' economic development priorities, ASEAN leadership agenda, and digital transformation efforts.

Discussions will cover key sectors including trade and investment, energy, infrastructure, healthcare, agriculture, defense, and emerging technologies, while reinforcing the role of U.S. companies as long-term partners in driving innovation, resilience, and sustainable growth in the Philippines

**INAUGURAL US-ASEAN STRATEGIC
BUSINESS FORUM**

CONTACT: slessing@usasean.org

USABC is organizing its inaugural Strategic Business Forum on Friday, **September 4, 2026** at the Singapore EDITION Hotel. The Forum, themed "Decoding Strategy in a Time of Global Realignment," will cover topics such as emerging technologies, energy transition, financial markets, talent & skills, and ASEAN geopolitics. USABC members can view the agenda and [register for delegate passes here](#) by selecting "USABC Member." Tickets for Corporate Members are US\$250. Chairman's Council members are eligible for up to 2 complimentary passes using discount code CHAIRMANS26. (Note: discount code is linked strictly to Chairman's Council email domains.

**COUNCIL IN THE NEWS**

- [US-ASEAN Trade Mission: Why 14 Major US Companies Are Investing in Cambodia | Ambassador Interview \(Kiri Post\)](#)
- [US-ASEAN Business Council Promotes Trusted Digital Technologies During Indonesia Mission \(In Diplomacy\)](#)
- [Minister of Industry and Trade Le Manh Hung works with businesses in the United States](#)
- [US business leaders to explore new investment opportunities in Philippines](#)
- [American businesses are still 'steady' with Vietnam despite tariffs. Policy indetermination is the biggest obstacle](#)
- [Will US-China Minerals Rivalry Be Zero-Sum for ASEAN? \(Featuring Marc Mealy\) \(BFM 89.9\)](#)
- [From Food and Mining to AI: Assessing Indonesia-United States Economic Cooperation](#)