



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

October 6, 2014

PAT McCrory  
GOVERNOR

HE Ambassador Gérard Araud  
French Ambassador to the United States of America  
The Embassy of France  
4101 Reservoir Road, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20007

Dear Ambassador Araud:

As Governor of the State of North Carolina, I am sensitive to legislative initiatives, both in the United States and abroad, that threaten the livelihood of our farmers, manufacturers, businesses and constituents. Therefore, I write to formally oppose your government's intention to implement "plain packaging" on tobacco products.

There is little evidence that plain packaging measures are anything more than symbolism. Moreover, these rules threaten to divert attention and resources from more effective actions that could achieve France's greater goal of being smoke free during the next decade.

Plain packaging laws are a direct assault on intellectual property and trademarks dating back to the Trade Marks Registration Act of 1875. If successful on tobacco, this policy would erode intellectual property protections worldwide and empower critics to take aim at similarly situated products.

Imagine if the U.S. required plain and standardized packaging for alcohol -- the same standard container regardless of the type of alcohol. In France, containers play an important role, as varieties have different bottle shapes. Outstanding French companies would be outraged and would argue that the quality and distinction of their products, as conveyed through their brand packaging, were being stolen -- and they would be right.

As an elected executive, I respect your country's sovereign prerogative to govern. However, I ask that you convey North Carolina's serious concerns regarding France's anti-competitive plain packaging proposal and, more importantly, encourage the French government to seek alternative and more effectual means of achieving your nation's laudable public health goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pat McCrory". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Pat" being particularly prominent.

Governor Pat McCrory

cc: Mr. Philippe Bouyoux