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The Vision Council Briefs Members on Policy Changes Amid Tariff Reduction

Alexandria, VA – May 12, 2025 –The Vision Council issued a statement on the U.S. and China's mutual decision to temporarily reduce tariffs on billions of dollars' worth of goods. The agreement, announced the morning of May 12, slashes tariffs on U.S. and Chinese imports for a 90-day period, offering short-term relief to industries affected by the long-standing trade conflict, including the optical and vision care sectors.

Under the agreement, the United States will lower its "reciprocal" tariff assessed against Chinese origin materials from 125% to 10%, while China will reduce its "reciprocal" tariff likewise on U.S. origin exports from 125% to 10%. The tariff reductions are effective May 14 and are set to expire in August unless extended through additional negotiations. These reductions do not impact previous product-specific duties (variable), Section 301 tariffs (ranging from 7.5% to 25%), or China IEEPA duties (20%).

According to a [Fact Sheet](#) issued by the White House, beginning May 14, importers of Chinese-origin goods will be subject to the following layers of duties:

1. **Regular Most Favored Nation (MFN) duties**, which vary by product.
2. **Section 301 duties**, applied in response to unfair trade practices, which range from 7.5% to 25%.
3. **"China IEEPA fentanyl" duties**, imposed in March at 20%, intended to address national security concerns related to the fentanyl crisis. This 20% is assessed in addition to any MFN or Section 301 duties.
4. **A 10% "reciprocal duty"**, applicable to all Chinese-origin goods. This rate is temporary and will **increase to 34% after 90 days** unless further action is taken. This duty stacks on top of the existing MFN, Section 301, and fentanyl-related duties.

Using plastic spectacle frames as an example, the combined tariff burden for the next 90 days would be approximately 40%, down from the previously assessed 155%—a significant reduction, but still a historically high rate. If no additional agreements are reached, the reciprocal duty will rise to 34% after the 90-day period, bringing the total tariff burden back up to approximately 64%.

On the export side, U.S.-origin goods shipped to China will now face a **10% reciprocal Chinese tariff**, in addition to any existing import duties imposed by Chinese authorities.

The Vision Council will update its website and tariff tables to reflect these changes, which take effect May 14, 2025.

“This temporary reprieve is a welcome development for our members,” said **Ashley Mills, CEO of The Vision Council**. “Many of the products impacted by these tariffs – such as frames, lenses, and essential manufacturing components – are integral to the U.S. vision industry. While the 90-day agreement provides some breathing room, uncertainty remains, and we continue to advocate for long-term policy solutions.”

The Vision Council’s support for members includes:

- A dedicated tariff [resource hub](#) with latest updates, and a [Tariff Dashboard](#) to simulate cost impacts and access real-time import data.
- Ongoing **policy monitoring** and direct [advocacy efforts](#) in Washington to secure relief and exemptions where possible.
- Regular **webinars and briefings** with trade experts and counsel.

“While today’s announcement is a step in the right direction, we encourage our members to remain engaged and informed as we continue navigating a complex trade environment,” added Mills.

For more information or to access The Vision Council’s tariff resources, visit thevisioncouncil.org or contact cpillsbury@thevisioncouncil.org.

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About The Vision Council

The Vision Council brings the power of sight to all through education, government relations, research, and technical standards. A leading advocate for the optical industry, the association positions its members to deliver the eyewear and eyecare people need to look and feel their best. Vital to health, independence, and safety, better vision leads to better lives.