



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai visits Milliken & Company and American & Efird in Visit Highlighting U.S. Textile Industry**

September 23, 2021

WASHINGTON – Milliken & Company and American & Efird (A&E) hosted United States Trade Representative (USTR) Ambassador Katherine Tai in two separate visits to the companies' state-of-the-art textile manufacturing facilities today, marking an unprecedented visit to the heart of the U.S. textile industry in the Carolinas by the nation's top trade chief.

Ambassador Tai's visit comes at a pivotal time for the U.S. textile supply chain, which produced \$64 billion in output in 2020 and employed nearly 530,000 workers. The industry has been at the forefront of a domestic production chain manufacturing over a billion personal protective equipment (PPE) items during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Ambassador's visit to Milliken included a tour of the company's Magnolia plant in Blacksburg, S.C., and a roundtable discussion highlighting the important role women contribute to textiles, the critical need for policies supporting a domestic supply chain, and the significant impact of the sector to the U.S. economy. Milliken is one of the largest textile companies in the U.S., employing more than 6,000 associates domestically and an additional 1,350 associates globally. Milliken's Textile Business alone employs 2,500 people across eight counties in South Carolina and is the fourth largest manufacturing employer in the Upstate.

"Milliken is honored to host Ambassador Tai at our Magnolia plant to discuss not only the invaluable contributions we make every day to our community and our nation, but also the importance of sound trade policies that bolster domestic production and the co-production chains we have built, in particular with our Western Hemisphere trading partners," said Chad McAllister, executive vice president of Milliken & Company and president, Textile Business. "To have Ambassador Tai on-site at one of our U.S. facilities is an opportunity to showcase our breadth of innovation in the industry and our passionate team of American workers who help our business succeed. We are fortunate and thankful for Ambassador Tai's leadership as well as her commitment to understanding the challenges and opportunities of our industry."

U.S. Trade Representative Ambassador Katherine Tai thanked the industry and said, "I want to thank NCTO for organizing this event. As United States Trade Representative, I am committed to helping all of your companies build on the success by finding market opportunities and helping reach new customers. I want to ensure that our trade policy matches the innovation and changes

happening in the textiles industry. With your help, we can continue addressing critical issues. In doing so, we will help the textiles industry maintain its competitive edge and ensure it remains a global standard-bearer in the years to come.”

On the second leg of her trip, Ambassador Tai visited American & Efird’s manufacturing facility in Mount Holly, N.C. American & Efird operates as part of Elevate Textiles and its global portfolio of advanced products and distinguished textile brands, including A&E, Burlington, Cone Denim, Gütermann and Safety Components, and representing more than 500 years of textile manufacturing knowledge.

During the visit, U.S. textile executives spanning the fiber, yarn, fabric, and finished product textile and apparel industry participated in a roundtable with the Ambassador at which they discussed the competitiveness of the domestic industry, outlined priority issues in Washington, such as the importance of the Western Hemisphere co-production chain and ways to jointly support domestic supply chains through Buy American and Berry Amendment policies that help onshore production, spur investment, maintain the safety and security of our armed forces and generate new jobs.

“It was an honor hosting Ambassador Tai at our manufacturing facility in Mount Holly, employing 380 valued associates and just 2 miles from where the company started 130 years ago,” said Sim Skinner, CEO of Elevate Textiles. “A&E maintains a significant manufacturing footprint in the Carolinas with 1,200 total associates, and we contribute significantly to our local community and the entire manufacturing base in the United States, touching every aspect of life, from the threads in Superbowl footballs to flags on the moon and most recently, to the very PPE products protecting our frontline heroes and fellow Americans against COVID-19 and the Space X suits that are orbiting Earth right now. We had an engaging discussion with the Ambassador on our company’s and industry’s innovation and competitiveness, and on the policy priorities that we believe will help ensure our competitiveness and long-term investment in the domestic textile industry.”

National Council of Textile Organizations (NCTO) President and CEO Kim Glas said, “We want to sincerely thank Ambassador Tai for visiting Milliken and American & Efird today. Her leadership in the international trade policy arena and her understanding of the unique challenges confronting domestic manufacturers and U.S. workers under the international trade system is unparalleled. The U.S. textile industry is one of the most dynamic, innovative industries in the U.S. economy and our co-production chain with our Western Hemisphere trade partners is essential. Trade policies are essential to this manufacturing sector and workforce. We look forward to working closely with the Ambassador and her office to advance policies that bolster domestic production.

“We are grateful to Ambassador Tai for participating in an engaging and substantive discussion with industry leaders today on a whole host of policies, ranging from the importance of Buy American and Berry Amendment government procurement policies to maintaining strong rules of origins in free trade agreements to the need to address larger systemic trade issues with China.”

## About American & Efid (A&E)

A&E, a portfolio company of Elevate Textiles, is the foremost manufacturer and distributor of premium quality industrial and consumer sewing thread, embroidery thread and technical textiles. Producers of apparel, automotive components, home furnishings, medical supplies, footwear and a diverse range of industrial products rely on A&E industrial sewing thread to manufacture their products. Customers select A&E as the preferred choice because of A&E's dedication to providing its customers with the finest products and services, at the highest quality, delivered globally. In addition to A&E's steadfast commitment to superior quality and customer service, A&E is a recognized industry leader in environmental sustainability and corporate social responsibility, and operates its global facilities with the utmost regard for the safety and health of its associates employed worldwide.

## About Milliken & Company

Materials science expert [Milliken & Company](#) knows that a single molecule has the potential to change the world. With innovative solutions across the textile, flooring, specialty chemical, and healthcare industries, Milliken answers some of the world's greatest challenges. Named to the World's Most Ethical Companies list by Ethisphere Institute for 15 straight years, the company meets the moment with an unwavering commitment to delivering sustainable solutions for its customers and communities. Eight thousand associates across 46 locations globally rally behind a common purpose: to positively impact the world for generations. Discover more about Milliken's curious minds and inspired solutions at [milliken.com](http://milliken.com) and on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#).

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NCTO is a Washington, DC-based trade association that represents domestic textile manufacturers.

- U.S. employment in the textile supply chain was 530,000 in 2020.
- The value of shipments for U.S. textiles and apparel was \$64.4 billion in 2020.
- U.S. exports of fiber, textiles and apparel were \$25.4 billion in 2020.
- Capital expenditures for textiles and apparel production totaled \$2.38 billion in 2019, the last year for which data is available.

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