WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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Committee on Safeguards

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NOTIFICATION UNDER ARTICLE 12.1(A) OF THE AGREEMENT ON SAFEGUARDS ON INITIATION OF AN INVESTIGATION AND THE REASONS FOR IT

UNITED STATES

Quartz surface products

The following communication, dated and received on 1 December 2025, is being circulated at the request of the delegation of the United States.

Pursuant to Article 12.1(a) of the WTO Agreement on Safeguards (Safeguards Agreement), the United States notifies that a safeguard investigation has been initiated as follows:

1. Specify the date when the investigation was initiated

The U.S. International Trade Commission (Commission) initiated the investigation on November 17, 2025.

A copy of the notice of institution of the investigation, which includes the scheduling of public hearings and the applicable rules of procedure, is attached.[1]

The Commission has determined that this investigation is "extraordinarily complicated" within the meaning of 19 U.S.C. § 2252(b)(2)(B)) and will make its serious injury determination by April 1, 2026. If the Commission's determination is affirmative, or the Commission is equally divided, the Commission will submit its report to the President within 180 days of the date on which the petition was properly filed, May 18, 2026.

2. Specify the product subject to the investigation

The product covered by this investigation is quartz surface products (QSP), which consists of slabs and other surfaces created from a mixture of materials that includes predominately silica (e.g., quartz, quartz powder, cristobalite, glass powder) as well as a resin binder (e.g., an unsaturated polyester). The incorporation of other materials, including, but not limited to, pigments, cement, or other additives does not remove the merchandise from the scope. However, the scope only includes products where the silica content is greater than any other single material, by actual weight. QSP is typically sold as rectangular slabs with a total surface area of approximately 45 to 60 square feet and a nominal thickness of one, two, or three centimeters. However, the scope includes surface products of all other sizes, thicknesses, and shapes. In addition to slabs, the scope includes, but is not limited to, other surfaces such as countertops, backsplashes, vanity tops, bar tops, work tops, tabletops, flooring, wall facing, shower surrounds, fireplace surrounds, mantels, and tiles. QSP may be polished or unpolished, cut or uncut, fabricated or not fabricated, cured or uncured, edged or not edged, finished or unfinished, thermoformed or not thermoformed, packaged or unpackaged, and may have any type of surface finish. In addition, QSP is covered by the scope whether or not it is imported attached to, or in conjunction with, nonsubject merchandise such as

[1] A copy of the USITC's notice of institution has been submitted electronically, and is available from the WTO Secretariat. To consult it, please contact Ms Anne Richards of the Rules Division (anne.richards@wto.org).

sinks, sink bowls, vanities, cabinets, and furniture. If QSP is imported attached to, or in conjunction with, such nonsubject merchandise, only the QSP is covered by the scope.

Subject merchandise includes material matching the above description that has been finished, packaged, or otherwise fabricated in a third country, including by cutting, polishing, curing, edging, thermoforming, attaching to, or packaging with another product, or any other finishing, packaging, or fabrication that would not otherwise remove the merchandise from the scope if performed in the country of manufacture of the QSP. The scope does not cover quarried stone surface products, such as granite, marble, soapstone, or quartzite.

For customs purposes, QSP covered by the investigation is provided for under Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States ("HTSUS") statistical reporting numbers 6810.99.0020, 6810.99.0040, and 7020.00.6000. These HTSUS numbers are provided for convenience and the written description of the scope is dispositive.

3. Provide the reasons for the initiation of the investigation

(i) Was the investigation initiated pursuant to a petition from the domestic industry?

Yes, the investigation was initiated pursuant to a petition filed by the Quartz Manufacturing Alliance of America, which consists of producers of QSP in the United States. The Commission deemed the petition to have been properly filed on November 17, 2025.

(ii) Evidence on the basis of which the investigation was initiated.

Increased Import Quantities

The petition[2] alleges that imports have increased, both in absolute terms and relative to U.S. production and consumption. According to the petition, QSP imports increased from 135 million square feet in 2020 to 234 million square feet in 2024, an increase of 73.4 percent. The ratio of imports to domestic production increased steadily over the same period.

Serious Injury or Threat of Serious Injury to the Domestic Industry

The petition alleges that imports are a substantial cause of serious injury because:

- the surge of imports of QSP into the U.S. market over the last five years has led to the idling of U.S. production facilities;
- the domestic industry also suffered from severely low levels of capacity utilization;
- the surge of imports of QSP has prevented a significant number of U.S. quartz producers to carry out domestic production of QSP at a reasonable profit; and
- the loss of U.S. market share over the past five years has had a negative effect on the domestic industry's employment.

With regards to threat of serious injury to the domestic industry, the petition alleges, among other factors, that the domestic industry suffered significant market share losses, deteriorating financial performance, low and declining capacity utilization, a negative impact on its employment, higher and growing inventories, and an inability to generate capital for investment and research and development.

Unforeseen Developments

The petition makes reference to the following unforeseen developments:

- despite the United States' attempts to alleviate the injury done to its domestic industry through the legitimate imposition of targeted antidumping (AD) and countervailing duty (CVD) orders, imports have nonetheless continued to increase, including surges from sources not subject to AD/CVD orders; situations where AD/CVD orders have seen such

[2] Much of the serious injury data is confidential business information. However, the United States has included relevant data and information regarding serious injury or threat of serious injury where possible.

limited success were not foreseen when the United States made concessions when it joined the WTO;
- the initial CVD investigations unveiled substantial evidence of elaborate subsidy programs implemented by China, India, and Turkey; and
- foreign producers have developed uniquely creative and elaborate schemes to evade the imposed AD/CVD orders, and such evasion was not foreseen by U.S. negotiators.

More detailed information regarding all of the above is contained in the petition, which can be found at https://edis.usitc.gov.

(iii) Evidence, if any, of critical circumstances where delay would cause damage which it would be difficult to repair.

The petitioner did not allege critical circumstances in the petition.

4. Provide a point of contact for the investigation and identify the preferred means for corresponding.

The point of contact for the investigation is:

Alejandro Orozco
Office of Investigations
U.S. International Trade Commission
500 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20436
Tel: (202-205-3177)

The public record for this investigation may be viewed on the Commission's electronic docket (EDIS) at https://edis.usitc.gov.

5. Provide the deadlines and procedures for importers, exporters and other interested parties to present evidence and their views, including (i) deadlines and procedures for Members and exporters to identify themselves as interested parties, if so required, to participate in the investigation, and (ii) the date of an intended public hearing as provided for in Article 3.1.

Persons wishing to participate in the investigation as parties must file an entry of appearance with the Secretary to the Commission not later than 21 days after publication of the notice of institution in the Federal Register. The Secretary will prepare a service list containing the names and addresses of all persons, or their representatives, who are parties to this investigation upon the expiration of the period for filing entries of appearance.

The Secretary will make confidential business information gathered in this investigation available to authorized applicants representing interested parties under the administrative protective order issued in the investigation, provided that the application is made not later than 21 days after the publication of the notice of institution in the Federal Register. A separate service list will be maintained by the Secretary for those parties authorized to receive confidential business information under the administrative protective order.

Each party who is an interested party may submit a prehearing brief to the Commission. The deadline for filing prehearing briefs on serious injury is February 17, 2026; that for filing prehearing briefs on remedy is April 7, 2026.

The Commission has scheduled separate hearings in connection with the serious injury and remedy phases of this investigation. The hearing on serious injury will be held on February 24, 2026, at the U.S. International Trade Commission Building, 500 E Street, SW, Washington, DC.

In the event that the Commission makes an affirmative serious injury determination or is equally divided on the question of serious injury in this investigation, a hearing on the question of remedy will be held on April 14, 2026.

Requests to appear at the hearings should be filed in writing with the Secretary to the Commission on or before February 13, 2026 for the serious injury hearing, and April 6, 2026 for the remedy hearing.

All parties and nonparties desiring to appear at the hearings and make oral presentations should participate in prehearing conferences to be held on February 20, 2026 for the serious injury hearing and April 10, 2026 for the remedy hearing, if deemed necessary.

Parties may file written testimony in connection with their presentation at the hearing. A nonparty who has testimony that may aid the Commission's deliberations may request permission to present a short statement at the hearings. Parties must submit any request to present a portion of their hearing testimony in camera no later than 7 business days prior to the date of the respective hearings.

The deadline for filing posthearing briefs for the serious injury phase of the investigation is March 3, 2026; the deadline for filing posthearing briefs for the remedy phase of the investigation, if any, is April 21, 2026.

In addition, any person who has not entered an appearance as a party to the investigation may submit a written statement of information pertinent to the consideration of serious injury on or before March 3, 2026, and pertinent to the consideration of remedy on or before April 21, 2026.

The attached notice of institution provides further information regarding deadlines and procedures applicable to this investigation.

The Commission's Handbook on E-Filing, available on the Commission's website at https://www.usitc.gov/secretary/documents/handbook_on_filing_procedures.pdf, elaborates upon the Commission's rules with respect to electronic filing.