

**STATEMENT OF PAUL TASH**  
**Chairman and CEO of the *Tampa Bay Times* and Times Publishing Company**

**BEFORE THE U.S. INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION**

*Uncoated Groundwood Paper from Canada*

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Good afternoon. My name is Paul Tash. I am the chairman and CEO of the *Tampa Bay Times*. We are Florida's largest newspaper, covering the Tampa Bay region.

I am here today because tariffs on newsprint are causing tremendous damage to American newspapers. The tariffs will harm local communities that newspapers serve. And soon, the tariffs will hurt our newsprint producers, including the one that brought this case.

I started working at the *Tampa Bay Times* as a news reporter 40 years ago. I have seen staggering changes in our business and huge growth in digital media. But customers and communities still rely on newspapers in print.

The *Tampa Bay Times* is committed to uncovering stories the public needs to know. We exposed how our school board re-segregated elementary schools and turned them into failure factories. We revealed deadly conditions in Florida's mental institutions. For our efforts, we've received 12 Pulitzers, including prizes for investigative and local reporting.

But we don't set out to win prizes. We do try to make the world a better place.

Two decades ago, we broke the story of a sheriff in the Florida Panhandle who was routinely bringing female inmates to his office, where he forced himself sexually upon them. Our reporting earned something much more important than journalistic acclaim. It brought justice. That sheriff went to prison.

When we broke that story, our newsroom employed about 400 people. Today, we are down to 140. We can't cover as many stories as we used to, and we can't check as many dark places like that sheriff's office.

This may not be a problem here in Washington. There are plenty of reporters in the major media centers. But in most cities and towns across the country, a story will likely never come to light unless the local paper covers it.

Newspaper publishing is a fragile business these days. Our industry suffered through the worst economic collapse in generations, and we have seen our traditional sources of revenue eroded by the rise of digital media. We have taken our own electronic opportunities as quickly as we can, but for local publishers, they do not begin to offset the losses in circulation and advertising revenue.

At many local newspapers, the water is already at our chins, and these tariffs will push it higher. At the Tampa Bay Times, the tariffs would add \$3.5 million a year to our newsprint expenses, an extra cost we simply cannot absorb.

Already this year, we laid off 50 employees, including some veteran reporters and editors.

After payroll, newsprint is our single biggest expense, and we are cutting back there too. Until last month, we published a free tabloid five mornings a week, but we cut that back to weekly, sharply curtailing a news source for tens of thousands of readers. In May, our newsprint consumption was down 18 percent from the previous year.

Why not just pass higher costs along to our readers? Some have said newspapers will cost just “pennies more per copy” after the tariffs. But we print more than 300 thousand copies of our Sunday paper, and all of those pennies add up – not just for us but for our readers.

An extra 40 dollars a year might not seem like much, but it is a real concern for many of our subscribers, especially those on fixed incomes. If we raise prices too quickly, we lose them as readers – and the advertising dollars they bring.

Our advertising customers face their own challenges, including Amazon. Their budgets for print ads are falling, not growing. If we raised ad rates, we would lose their business – often to digital advertising on Google and Facebook.

In summary, newspapers are hurting, and our pain will spread inevitably to our suppliers. Very soon, these tariffs will start harming the very companies they are supposed to protect. That is why almost every American newsprint manufacturer

has opposed them. It's not clear to me why this case was launched, but I do hope the Commission will bring it to an end.

Thank you.