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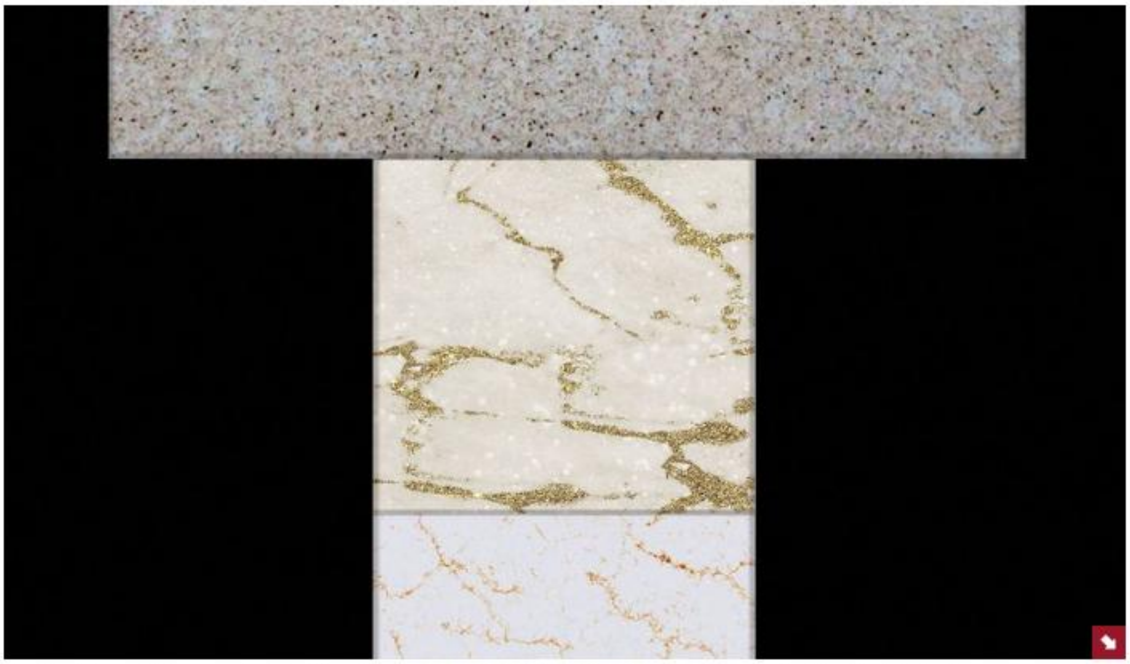
Trump draws the quartz line

Sell here, build here



President Donald Trump protecting the U.S. quartz industry illustration by Alexander Hunter/The Washington Times
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COMMENTARY

By Peter Navarro - *Wednesday, August 5, 2026*

OPINION:

With his recent proclamation protecting America's quartz industry from a devastating surge in imports, President Trump is once again standing squarely with American workers and manufacturers. The case also exposes another blatant foreign ripoff—led by India, aided by Vietnam, Spain, and Thailand, and built on the familiar predatory model of capturing the American market while hollowing out American production.

Quartz surface products are engineered slabs used for kitchen countertops, bathroom vanities, backsplashes, floors, and wall surfaces. They may look decorative. Economically, however, they are heavy manufacturing: Crushed silica, resins, pigments, presses, curing ovens, polishing lines, robotics, skilled labor, and large capital investments.

The U.S. International Trade Commission has found that surging quartz imports are a substantial cause of serious injury to the American industry. The numbers are damning. India supplied 36.2% of U.S. quartz imports by volume in 2024 and 39.1% during the first nine months of 2025. Vietnam supplied another 18.6% in 2024, Spain 14.6%, and Thailand 12%.

Imports captured fully 88.3% of U.S. apparent consumption by volume in 2024. India alone captured 32%.

This is not a marginal trade flow. It is a foreign domination of the American market.

President Trump's remedy is both tough and disciplined. Beginning August 15, the United States will establish a four-year tariff-rate quota, with an initial quota of 140 million square feet. Imports within the quota face a 25% tariff; imports above the quota face a 50% tariff. The rates phase down over four years while the quota gradually expands. Existing antidumping, countervailing, and other duties remain in place. The proclamation also arms the U.S. Trade Representative to stop circumvention and import surges through excluded countries.

This is not the industry's first trip to the trade court. President Trump's first-term duties virtually shut Communist China's dumped and subsidized quartz out of the American market—yet Beijing's mercantilist machine did not fold its tent. In documented cases, Chinese slabs were rerouted through Malaysia, Vietnam, and Taiwan—processed, repackaged, or misclassified just enough to conceal their origin—and shipped in to evade the duties.

But transshipment is only half the story. As direct Chinese imports collapsed, India's own subsidized, dumping-prone industry rushed into the breach and captured the market share Beijing had lost.

It has been a two-headed foreign assault: Chinese products changing flags on one side, indigenous foreign dumpers on the other.

President Trump's global safeguard attacks both rackets at once—stopping the shell game while barring successor exporters from inheriting the market China was forced to surrender.

Now look at the geography of the jobs.

American quartz is made in Le Sueur and Belle Plaine, Minnesota; Dickson, Tennessee; McRae-Helena and Adairsville, Georgia; Latta, South Carolina; Sebring, Florida; and Sealy, Texas. These are heartland production towns where a manufacturing payroll supports truckers, machine technicians, maintenance crews, local diners, equipment suppliers, schools, and tax bases.

Across the water, India's quartz production network stretches from Morbi in Gujarat to Mekaguda in Telangana, Hosur in Tamil Nadu, and Nasirabad in Ajmer district, Rajasthan. Globalization has turned these communities into ugly sister cities: Le Sueur versus Morbi, Dickson versus Mekaguda, McRae-Helena versus Hosur.

When a production line accelerates over there on the strength of low-priced and often dumped exports, a line slows here. The slab job cannot exist in both places. The investment dollar cannot be spent twice. The payroll cannot be paid twice.

The American evidence is painfully concrete. Guidoni invested $96 million in McRae-Helena and hired 455 workers; by early 2026, the plant was down to one eight-hour shift, two days a week. LX Hausys added a third line and 40 jobs in Adairsville in 2020, then cut quartz production 40%.

Predictably, importers will shout about countertop prices and housing affordability. The ITC examined that claim and concluded that quartz represents only a tiny fraction of the cost of a new home and that the tariff's contribution to housing costs should be minimal.

The more important affordability question is whether an American family can afford a home after its factory job has been shipped overseas. Full stop.

Most importantly, this action offers foreign producers a constructive choice. The president has authorized agreements that may exchange relief for commitments to limit exports and invest in quartz production—including unfinished slab production—inside the United States.

That is the Trump trade doctrine in one sentence: Sell here, build here.

The next slab installed in an American kitchen should increasingly carry something more valuable than a brand name. It should carry an American paycheck.

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