

U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell

**Finance Committee Hearing to Consider the Nomination of Michael Faulkender to be
Deputy Treasury Secretary**

March 6, 2025

Sen. Cantwell Q&A

[[AUDIO](#)] [[VIDEO](#)]

Sen. Cantwell: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know there's a vote going on and people are trying to get back and forth, so I'll try to be as brief as I can. Mr. Faulkender, thank you so much. I had similar conversations with the Secretary of Treasury on markets, but every day, I'm getting up and all I'm doing is reading the front pages of our newspapers. Well, I'm reading more than the front pages, but every day, *every day* in the majority of newspapers in my state, [there] are comments about the tariffs. We're a very trade dependent state.

And so now, I feel like we're almost just having chaos about what are we doing. One day it's about fentanyl, one day it's about emergency services, one day we'll give these exemptions, one day we'll go back to this, and so I'm trying to get your views.

Apples, potatoes, and wheat are the largest agriculture exports in our state. They represent over \$3 billion worth of agriculture products around the world. And so I'm trying to understand, if you understand the uncertainty that's being created right now with these tariffs. If you get that it's hard for businesses to even follow what is the predictability and certainty about what the President is even doing or proposing, because it's changing every day.

Faulkender: Thank you, Senator, as Secretary Bessent has talked about, there really are three objectives with tariffs, right? So, one of them is they potentially are a source of revenue to the federal government. The second is they are to address long standing inequities in the way that other countries have provided subsidies, manipulated their currencies, engaged in technology theft. And then the third is as a negotiating tactic in order to get other countries to address some of the concerns that the United States has, and using access to U S consumers as an opportunity to obtain concessions.

And so I think when you look at the President's approach on Canada and Mexico, it was very much to get them to focus on the Fentanyl crisis, on the fact that 100,000 Americans are dying of fentanyl.

Sen. Cantwell: Do you really think that Canada was our fentanyl problem? Do you? Do you?

Faulkender: I have not had access to the data on that. My understanding is that some of it does come in from Canada. I grant you that more of it comes from Mexico than Canada.

Sen. Cantwell: A lot more. But so, you're saying it's about revenue, which I heard this from the first Trump administration, he wanted to pay for infrastructure by doing tariffs. I disagreed. He never got an infrastructure bill. We did get an infrastructure bill.

So, what I've tried to express many times, and I hope our colleagues will join us in trying to work with the administration, or show that this is a congressional responsibility here, is that tariffs really do hurt our economy. When those tariffs and retaliatory tariffs had shut down the apple market, a \$120 million market just to India alone, that we then had to get the tariffs removed, and they're just recovering from that. And so now we're starting this again. And so the fact that you- does the President believe that opening markets is a key goal here? Does he believe in opening markets?

Faulkender: Senator, I think the objective is to ensure that manufacturers here in the United States face similar conditions when they export as when foreign manufacturers import into the United States. And so there's very much a focus on reciprocity, and that can mean higher tariffs for both countries. It can also mean lower tariffs for both countries.

I would be perfectly fine with an outcome where reciprocal tariffs cause other nations to lower their tariff rates and grant greater access to their markets for our manufacturers.

Sen. Cantwell: I definitely disagree with the President on this. I believe in the innovation economy. I believe that we set the mark with the CHIPS and Science Act of saying, invest, and we're going to test bed faster, and we're going to deploy faster, and we're going to grow faster. And we were seeing the results of that.

Now, with a very integrated global economy, with supply chains, you're disrupting with these tariffs, the supply chain. That's not even my question. My question, though, was, does he understand the level of chaos that is happening now? Because people can't even follow what his game plan is.

So I appreciate that you've illuminated that it's about revenue, that it's about inequities, and now you're also saying it is about concessions. But I really, really hope that he understands how much damage is being done every day to the agricultural sector. And it's not that people, rich people, won't buy farmland, they will buy farmland. It just we'll have a lot less farmers. So, Mr. Chairman, I hope we all can help work on this in the future.