

# Sensible Solutions

By [Levon Johnson](#)

*Greater Elkhart Chamber President/CEO*

This is the eighth of ten consecutive articles that I will be writing covering the most frequent topics I have discussed in the first half of 2019.

Over the past year and a half the number one issue that I have been asked about is the impact of tariffs on companies and the economy of Greater Elkhart. The questions come from media, politicians, employers, employees, and so on and so on. The question usually comes something simple like, “Are tariffs hurting business in Elkhart?” Of course that simple question does not have a simple answer and a general response is not sufficient.

There are some things that, in numerous discussions, most people have agreed on. First, the United States needs to focus on getting our trade imbalances with other countries under control. Second, the protection of intellectual properties of U.S. companies is critical to the continued prosperity of our country’s economy. Third, policies that are aimed at helping support the investment and growth of a particular industry are positive. Fourth, policies that are aimed at helping one industry should not cause collateral damage by negatively impacting other industries.

There is no question that the tariffs have had an impact on the supply chain of all industries that have been affected by increased cost of doing business. Of course it will ultimately be the end user, the consumer, who will let us know when the price we pay for goods is too high. When the consumer stops paying the higher prices for the products we produce, then the answer to the question of “Are tariffs hurting business in Elkhart?” will be a resounding yes.

The lost conversation about tariffs is how it is impacting things like agriculture, which was never meant to be a target of the trade issues between countries. Yet, here they are caught in the crossfire.

What we are all looking for are sensible solutions to trade imbalances and protections for intellectual properties. To that end, our Senators and Representatives for our state and area have all called for a more common sense and comprehensive approach to taking on those countries that seek to take advantage of or create loop holes in our economic policies. Your Greater Elkhart Chamber of Commerce will continue to advocate for that sensible approach in support of strengthening the foundations of our area economy.

As always we are here to help you have a positive and productive week.