

## Swinney Appeals to Trump to Remove US Tariff on Scotch Whisky

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Scotland's First Minister John Swinney has urged US President Donald Trump to remove a 10per cent tariff on Scotch whisky imports during his visit to Aberdeenshire, highlighting the impact on the industry. Swinney warned the tariff is costing the industry around £4 million per week and endangering rural Scottish jobs.

They met at the opening of a new golf course at Trump's Aberdeenshire resort, where Swinney held a private discussion with Trump before the ribbon-cutting ceremony. During their exchange, Swinney made a direct plea for Scotch whisky to be exempted from import duties, a move he said would safeguard one of Scotland's most important export sectors. Trump, who had appeared unaware of the issue, responded positively and indicated he would consider the request.

Scotch whisky remains a pillar of the Scottish economy, with exports to the United States valued at approximately £978million in 2023. The US remains the industry's largest international market, and many in the sector fear that the reinstated tariff, originally imposed during previous trade disputes, could undo years of growth.

Speaking after the meeting, Swinney described Scotch whisky as a "uniquely produced" product that supports thousands of jobs and boosts rural economies across the country. "It's not just a drink, it's part of Scotland's identity and a critical part of our export success," he said.

Swinney also raised concern about the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, urging Trump to press for an immediate ceasefire and enhanced humanitarian access.

Between October 2019 and March 2021, US tariffs of 25per cent were levied on single malt Scotch, causing export losses of over £600million. The First Minister has since committed to defending Scottish producers and warned that prolonged trade barriers would threaten both employment and investment.

Trade bodies, including the Scotch Whisky Association, have echoed Swinney's call. Industry leaders argue that if the tariffs remain in place, smaller producers in particular may struggle to maintain their foothold in the US market.

With ongoing UK–US trade negotiations yet to conclude, many observers consider this moment a potential turning point. Whether Trump will act on Swinney's request remains uncertain, but the appeal underlines a pragmatic, business-focused approach from the Scottish Government, aimed at protecting one of Scotland's most iconic industries.