



THE ASSOCIATION & VOICE OF THE US SEWN PRODUCTS INDUSTRY

**Yes, We Can**  
**April 2025 X-Files**

By: Xochil Herrera Scheer  
The Chicago Pattern Maker  
[www.xochil.com](http://www.xochil.com)

In my February edition, I discussed two trade shows, one of which was Texworld New York City, where I represented the SEAMS Association. I met many people at the show who were looking for Made in USA manufacturing. However, the majority of the vendors present were from outside of the country, primarily from China or other parts of Asia. This experience is nothing new.

In fact, it was at that show, which took place during Inauguration Week, where a panel which focused on tariffs, one of the panelists stated that “no one wants to work in this industry, no one wants to make things, and no one wants their children to go work in a factory.” Now, this is a room FULL of people who do exactly that – make things. They are from all over the world, but they share that commonality. I found that sentiment to be extremely insulting to every person in that room. More than a bit peeved, I hoped for an opportunity to make a comment, but unfortunately I was not able to get to the mic in time from the booth.

More recently, there has been lots of news coverage on tariffs, where I am finding that both the delivery of such news, and the comment section on all these posts and stories contain an overwhelmingly negative attitude towards American manufacturing.

I don't know about you, but this gets me fired up.

I really want to help dispel the myth that “you can't make it here” and show people exactly what we are capable of. Yes, it is all too true that the industry is a fraction of what it once was, and we have unfortunately continued to lose mills and factories, even into the last five years. We stepped up to help our country in a time of dire need, and were rewarded with the immediate loss of work once cheaper options opened back up overseas. We know how capable we are.

We make a large variety of products domestically, and given the opportunity, I know that we would love to expand our capacities and capabilities. However, few companies are vertically integrated, and we rely on the brands to buy in. The present, and even the future of our industry, may never mirror what it was before – and there are different challenges today than in those days. A country can't decimate an industry and expect it to come back at full force overnight.

Inspired and fueled by what happened in New York, I pitched this project to Will Duncan, how I wanted to highlight all the great things I know we already make, and show the public a variety of items that are made, and are possible. With his support, along with Britt Moore, Ryan Smith,

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and especially Nancy, SEAMS' Business Manager, we started reaching out to SEAMS members to figure out how many items we could get together for the showcase in a relatively short timeframe.

Side note: Somewhere, stored on an inaccessible floppy disk relic, housed in a box in my basement, I still have the scholarship essay I wrote as a high school senior, which talked about how I wanted to start a cut-and-sew union factory of my own, and my goal was to make clothes right here. While that particular path did not play out in the same way that I wrote about as a 17-year-old on her way to fashion school, I am living that dream today in a different way.

This project took a lot of time, lots and LOTS of follow up. Connecting the dots to confirm supply chains, and gathering photos, logos, and physical products. Some of the obstacles I ran into were instances where a member had a fully Made in USA product, but didn't have permission from the brand to share the supply chain, or that not enough components were from member

companies. Part of our criteria for the showcase project was to have at least three or more members, to best highlight the collaboration involved. In order to get a well-rounded group of products, I decided to design and coordinate the production of a few custom pieces. I'm really excited about that, as I typically have to work within a brand's perimeters, and was able to create using fabrics I haven't gotten the chance to try yet, utilizing materials donated by Clover Knits, Beverly Knits and MMI Textiles..

What this showcase highlights is the interconnectedness and collaboration happening in our industry. While I understand and respect the thought of "protecting" one's supply chain from competitors, I think what many brands don't realize is that gatekeeping actually hurts the suppliers in some cases. The more business that supplier has, the more likely they are to not only stay open, but expand upon their capacity and capabilities, invest in their workforce and their equipment.

While you don't want to give a competitor an edge, I'm glad that our members understand, and remember that we are not actually competing against one another, but we are competing against the suppliers all over the world. A rising tide raises all ships. I really admire when brands like Red Land Cotton, American Giant and NW Alpine Gear are transparent about their supply chains. Not always calling out by name, but if you ask, you're likely to get an answer, as I did.

I am truly blown away how many pieces we were able to put together, and how many members contributed to this endeavor. We ended the project with more than 25 products, made by the combined efforts of more than 40 members (which is even more once we include the equipment suppliers and software company members that support the manufacturing of all of these products). This was so much more than I thought possible with such a short window of time to pull together. Thank you to everyone for your involvement. I hope this showcase will expand even further at the next Texprocess show in 2027!

I am so excited to unveil the SEAMS "Supply Chain USA Showcase" at Texprocess Americas next week and show everyone \*exactly\* what we are capable of. If you are planning to be in

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Atlanta, please check it out at Booth #2847. You can also find me in several Tech Talks throughout the week, and I will be sharing my expertise on the symposium panel, "A Marketing How-To: From Strategy to Content to Close." I especially look forward to sharing this showcase, and I know that our Pavilion will be busy as ever this year.

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