

U.S. Business Urges Concrete Progress on Trade Front

February 11, 2008

The undersigned associations urge the Congress to approve the trade agreements with Colombia, Panama, and Korea, and to work with the private sector and the Administration to bring the Doha Round negotiations to a successful conclusion this year. In addition to moving forward quickly with its short-term domestic economic stimulus program, we believe the Congress also needs to work on policies that help open markets to sustain U.S. economic growth over the longer term. Expanded trade and investment are key to a healthy and growing world economy in which the United States has a vital stake. With 95 percent of the world's population beyond our borders, the United States must look to international trade and investment to stimulate our economic growth.

We are pleased that Congress approved the U.S.-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement (TPA) last year and welcome the return to a bipartisan trade policy, which that vote represents. We call on Congress to approve this year the trade agreements negotiated with Colombia, Panama, and Korea, which will open important markets to U.S. exporters of both agricultural and industrial goods and service suppliers, protect investments and intellectual property, and set forth strong rules on transparency and other key issues. Colombian and Panamanian products already enter the U.S. market at preferential rates, and these agreements will help right the balance and give U.S. suppliers greater access to those markets. These agreements are also important to overall U.S. strategic interests, especially the trade agreement with Colombia, which is on the front lines in the battle to contain illegal drug trade.

We share the belief that a comprehensive trade adjustment assistance (TAA) program is necessary, and we urge prompt action to reinstate and expand the existing program. For more than forty years, TAA has been one of the foundation stones of our national trade policy, and we should not pass up the opportunity to strengthen and improve the program.

Finally, the Doha Round provides the single greatest opportunity to reduce trade barriers globally. An ambitious result remains the business community's primary objective. In order for the Doha Round to be judged a success, there must be genuine market-access gains for American farmers, manufacturers, and service providers. U.S. leadership continues to be essential in order for the Round to succeed. The clock is running out, so WTO members must come to the table prepared to bargain and avoid political posturing.

U.S. business recognizes that the economic prosperity of our nation is dependent on an open system of trade and investment. We have unique opportunities before us, and we should seize them. Congressional action this year on the three trade agreements and a concerted U.S.-led effort to finish the Doha round will demonstrate to the world

that the United States is fully committed to economic expansion and growth that will benefit consumers, workers, and farmers the world round.



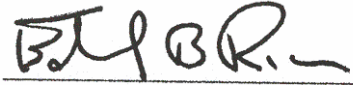
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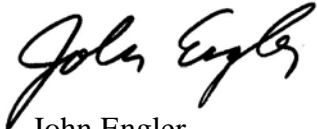
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