

July 6, 2011

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Dave Camp
Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means
United States House of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20515

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Sander Levin
Ranking Member
Committee on Ways and Means
United States House of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Baucus and Camp and Ranking Members Hatch and Levin:

The undersigned organizations urge you to support the implementing bills for the trade agreements with South Korea, Colombia, and Panama as the Senate Committee on Finance and House Committee on Ways and Means hold “mock” markup hearings. We applaud the work of your Committees for taking these next steps toward approval of these vital agreements, and we hope they will be considered and approved by the full House and Senate as expeditiously as possible.

These trade agreements would create tens of thousands of jobs for American workers and farmers — and benefit businesses both large and small — all across the nation. They would level the playing field for American exporters, thereby creating real business opportunities for U.S. businesses and their employees. For example, South Korea currently collects \$4 in tariffs on U.S. exports for every \$1 the United States collects in tariffs on South Korean exports. U.S. businesses confront similar or higher trade barriers in Colombia and Panama.

The agreements would sweep away most of these tariffs and other trade barriers immediately upon implementation. The accords will also open these countries’ services markets, protect the intellectual property of American innovators and creative artists, and remove non-tariff barriers that can stifle international commerce.

For far too long, the United States has sat on the sidelines while other nations have clinched their own trade deals with South Korea, Colombia, and Panama, threatening to put American workers and businesses large and small at a competitive disadvantage. On July 1, the European Union-Korea Free Trade Agreement entered into force, and the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement will do so on August 15. U.S. farmers and ranchers, for example, have already lost more than \$1 billion in sales to Colombia due to delays in approval of the agreement with that country.

In addition, South Korea, Colombia, and Panama are among America’s most important allies on the world stage. These nations are robust democracies whose citizens share U.S. values and have long stood by us in strategic regions. Enhancing trade ties with these nations strengthens those alliances and advances the U.S. national interest beyond the creation of needed jobs and export sales.

Our organizations also support the Trade Adjustment Assistance program, and many of our organizations support the Generalized System of Preferences and the Andean Trade Preference Act as well.

To level the playing field for trade, create American jobs, and reaffirm U.S. leadership, the undersigned organizations urge the swift approval of the three agreements and resolution of the differences over Trade Adjustment Assistance by both the House and Senate.

Sincerely,

Aerospace Industries Association
American Apparel & Footwear Association
American Automotive Policy Council
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Soybean Association
Association of American Chambers of Commerce in Latin America
Association of Equipment Manufacturers
Business Software Alliance
Coalition of Service Industries
Computer & Communications Industry Association
Footwear Distributors & Retailers of America
Emergency Committee for American Trade
The Financial Services Roundtable
Grocery Manufacturers Association
International Intellectual Property Alliance
Motion Picture Association of America
National Association of Manufacturers
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Barley Growers Association
National Corn Growers Association
National Fisheries Institute
National Foreign Trade Council
National Oilseed Processors Association
Outdoor Industry Association
Recording Industry Association of America
Retail Industry Leaders Association
Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association
SPI: The Plastics Industry Trade Association
TechNet
Travel Goods Association
USA Dry Pea & Lentil Council
U.S. Canola Association
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
U.S. Council for International Business

cc: The Members of the Senate Committee on Finance
The Members of the House Committee on Ways and Means