



## **U.S.-Middle East Free Trade Coalition**



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### **Senate Finance and House Ways and Means Favorably Report U.S.-Bahrain FTA *Coalition Member, National Foreign Trade Council, Commend Committees for Quick Action***

Washington, D.C. – The U.S.-Middle East Free Trade Coalition called on Congress to quickly complete action on the U.S.-Bahrain FTA, now that members of the Senate Finance and House Ways and Means Committees have approved unanimously the implementing legislation.

“We commend the members of the House Ways and Means and Senate Finance Committees for approving the U.S.-Bahrain FTA with solid bipartisan support. Clearly, this is thanks to a high-standard trade agreement that strongly benefits both countries and strengthens a strategic and longstanding relationship with an important U.S. ally in the Middle East,” stated Jeff Donald, Senior Vice President at the Business Council for International Understanding.

Bahrain is a major non-NATO ally of the United States, is the headquarters for the U.S. Navy’s Fifth Fleet, and has been a strong supporter in the global war on terrorism and the military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Under the terms of the agreement, all American consumer and industrial products will immediately become duty-free. Similarly, 98% of U.S. agricultural tariff lines will be immediately eliminated with the remaining 2% phased out over 10 years.

In addition to the Bahrain FTA, the United States Trade Representative is currently negotiating agreements with Oman and the United Arab Emirates. In the Middle East, Free Trade Agreements already exist between the United States and Israel, Jordan and Morocco.

“This agreement is important at two levels,” said Chuck Dittrich, Vice President for Regional Trade Initiatives at the National Foreign Trade Council. “It continues the U.S. momentum toward our goal of establishing a Middle East Free Trade Zone by 2013 and thereby offering the people of the Middle East the promise of improved economic

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conditions and true participation in the multilateral trading system. Second, this agreement presents us with the opportunity to restore the constructive spirit of bipartisanship that has characterized U.S. trade policy for decades.”

The U.S.-Middle East Free Trade Coalition, managed jointly by the National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC) and the Business Council for International Understanding (BCIU), is made up of over 110 U.S. companies and associations supporting trade expansion and economic development in the Middle East.

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*The National Foreign Trade Council ([www.nftc.org](http://www.nftc.org)) is a leading business organization advocating an open, rules-based global trading system. Founded in 1914 by a broad-based group of American companies, the NFTC now serves hundreds of member companies through its offices in Washington and New York.*

*The Business Council for International Understanding (BCIU), a U.S. business association founded in 1955 at White House initiative, is dedicated to promoting dialogue and action between the business and government communities for the purpose of expanding international commerce.*