

September 28, 2009

The Honorable Charles Rangel
Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman
Committee on Finance
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dave Camp
Ranking Member
Committee on Ways and Means
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Rangel, Chairman Baucus, Ranking Member Camp, and Ranking Member Grassley:

As you know, the deadline for the expiration of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program – December 31, 2009 – is drawing closer. As you consider the Congressional agenda for the fall, we ask that you make immediate renewal of this program a priority.

We have entered a very sensitive period for the American companies and families that have come to depend on the duty savings granted through the preference programs, and the producers in developing countries that rely on the programs to support export-related jobs. U.S. customers must decide whether to continue to use the preference programs to source goods from beneficiary countries, or shift sourcing elsewhere. They must also decide if they need to raise prices to cover duty increases they will incur if GSP is not renewed. Congressional action – or inaction – has an enormous impact on those decisions.

We understand the desire of Members of Congress to take a close look at existing U.S. preference programs to ensure they are working, particularly for least-developed countries. Many of our organizations have been actively engaged in that effort and look forward to continuing to work with you to improve our preference programs for developing countries and American users alike. However, it is not realistic to expect that this effort could be completed before GSP expires on December 31. Therefore, we ask that you move GSP renewal early in the fall, while also continuing in earnest the important discussions on preference improvements, with a goal of enacting preference improvement legislation next year.

During periods of economic hardship, uncertainty reigns supreme. By extending GSP in a timely manner, Congress has the opportunity to remove some of that uncertainty for companies and workers in the United States and developing countries

that are struggling to compete in a global economy. As you move into a busy fall, we therefore urge you to make renewal of this preference program a priority for early action.

Sincerely,

Abilene Machine, Inc. (Abilene, KS)

Albaugh, Inc. (Ankeny, IA)

Alstom, Inc. (Windsor, CT)

Association of American Chambers of Commerce in Latin America

The Association of Equipment Manufacturers

Black Diamond Equipment, Ltd. (Salt Lake City, UT)

Bread for the World

Camelbak Products LLC (Petaluma, CA)

Caterpillar, Inc. (Peoria, IL)

Chevron Corporation (San Ramon, CA)

Coalition for GSP

Crayola (Easton, PA)

Cummins Inc. (Columbus, IN)

Emergency Committee for American Trade (ECAT)

E-Rail LLC (Chicago, IL)

Ferguson Enterprises, Inc. (Newport News, VA)

FMC Corporation (Philadelphia, PA)

For Every Body (Lindon, UT)

The Foreign Candy Company, Inc. (Hull, IA)

General Electric Company (Fairfield, CT)

Grocery Manufacturers Association
The Home Depot (Atlanta, GA)
Initiative for Global Development
International Labor Rights Forum
J. C. Penney Company, Inc. (Plano, TX)
Maco Int'l. Inc. (Sandy, UT)
National Confectioners Association
National Customs Brokers and Forwarders Association of America
National Foreign Trade Council
National Retail Federation
The ONE Campaign
Outdoor Industry Association
Oxfam America
PBI/Gordon Corporation (Kansas City, MO)
Piremag Corporation (Middletown, NJ)
Retail Industry Leaders Association
S&V Industries (Akron, OH)
Target Corporation (Minneapolis, MN)
Ten Strawberry Street (Denver, CO)
TRInternational, Inc. (Seattle, WA)
U.S. Association of Importers of Textiles and Apparel
U.S.-Bangladesh Advisory Council
U.S. Brazil Business Council

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

U.S.-India Business Council

Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. (Bentonville, AR)

Women Thrive Worldwide

Xerox Corporation (Norwalk, CT)

Yazaki, North America, Inc. (Canton, MI)