



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Diverse U.S. Textile & Apparel Industries Unite to Urge U.S./Peru – U.S./Colombia Trade Agreements Approval**

**ARLINGTON, VA (Friday, May 11, 2007)** – An unprecedented coalition of the entire U.S. textile and apparel supply chain – representing fiber producers, yarn spinners, knitters, weavers, dyers, equipment suppliers, apparel manufacturers, importers and retailers – sent letters today to President Bush and members of Congress urging quick approval of the U.S./Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement and the U.S./Peru Trade Promotion Agreement.

“Urgency has brought together a unified response from the U.S. textile and apparel industry supply chain organizations.” explained **Kevin M. Burke, President and CEO, American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA)**. “It is vital to the Andean and American economies that the U.S./Colombia and U.S./Peru trade agreements be approved as soon as possible. Those agreements will provide our industry with permanent, reciprocal and immediate duty-free access for ALL apparel and textiles. Now that congressional leaders and the Bush administration have agreed on a bipartisan trade policy framework, we need to move immediately to secure approval of the pending Andean trade promotion agreements. Moreover, the existing duty-free program with the Andean region needs to be maintained until those agreements can take full effect.”

The U.S./Peru Trade Promotion Agreement was completed in late 2006 and the U.S./Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement was completed in early 2007. Both are pending before the U.S. Congress. The Peru agreement has already been approved by the Peruvian Congress while the Colombian agreement is currently being considered by that country’s national assembly. The current temporary provision, the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act (ATPDEA), will expire on June 30, 2007 unless Congress takes action to extend the program and/or approves the more permanent U.S./Peru and U.S./Colombia trade agreements.

In 2006, the United States imported \$1.4 billion worth of apparel from the Andean region. In turn, U.S. cotton growers and textile manufacturers exported \$260 million worth of cotton, yarn

and fabric to the Andean region. If approval and implementation of the trade agreements continue to be delayed, the loss of duty-free access and growing uncertainty will destabilize this important trade partnership, threatening the jobs of over 500,000 apparel and related workers in the Andean region and tens of thousands of cotton growers and textile workers in the United States.

The 12 diverse organizations supporting the approval of the U.S./Peru and the U.S./Colombia Promotion Trade Agreements and the extension of the ATPDEA, who signed today's letter to President Bush and key Congressional leaders include:

- American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA)
- American Fiber Manufacturers Association (AFMA)
- Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI)
- INDA, Association of the Nonwoven Fabrics Industry
- National Cotton Council (NCC)
- National Council of Textile Organizations (NCTO)
- National Retail Federation (NRF)
- North Carolina Manufacturers Association (NCMA)
- Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA)
- Sewn Products Equipment & Suppliers of the Americas (SPESA)
- South Carolina Manufacturers Alliance (SCMA)
- Textile Distributors Association (TDA)

To view the letter to President Bush, please go to

<http://www.apparel and footwear.org/letters/andeanassnltr070511-bush.pdf>.

To view the letter sent to Members of Congress, please go to

<http://www.apparel and footwear.org/letters/andeanassnltr070511-rangel.pdf>.

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*The American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA) is the national trade association representing apparel, footwear and other sewn products companies, and their suppliers, which compete in the global market. AAFA's mission is to promote and enhance its members' competitiveness, productivity and profitability in the global market by minimizing regulatory, commercial, political, and trade restraints.*