



June 2, 2008

Chairman Sander M. Levin and Ranking Member Wally Herger
Committee on Ways & Means
U.S. House of Representatives
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

RE: H.R. 5059 and the Miscellaneous Tariff Bill (MTB) Package

Dear Chairman Levin and Ranking Member Herger:

On behalf of the American Apparel and Footwear Association (AAFA) – the national trade association representing the apparel and footwear industries, and their suppliers – I am writing in strong support of H.R. 5059 – to amend the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) with respect to lesser developed countries.

In order to maximize the benefits of AGOA for U.S. manufacturers who produce apparel in or import apparel from sub-Saharan Africa, it is important to make sure AGOA runs efficiently and effectively to maximize apparel and textile trade. The current “abundant supply” provision in AGOA has created confusion for many U.S. apparel companies.

For example, current law designates denim as being in “abundant supply” in Africa. This arbitrary finding makes it difficult for companies to use third country denim if they do not use sufficient quantities of African denim because the current law penalizes companies that do not exhaust African sources of any fabric deemed to be in “abundant supply.” Many U.S. companies have put their denim businesses on “hold” because of the complications and uncertainties that result from the abundant supply restrictions, and their inability to meet the non-market based and arbitrary abundant supply targets. H.R. 5059 would remove the “abundant supply” regulations, therefore streamlining operations for U.S. companies that operate under AGOA.

Furthermore, H.R. 5059 would add Mauritius as a lesser developed beneficiary sub-Saharan country, therefore expanding opportunities for U.S. companies to source from AGOA countries.

On the whole, AAFA supports reduction in duties on products that provide U.S. manufacturers with increased access to foreign inputs no longer available in the United States. Similarly, we support duty reductions that provide U.S. consumers benefits through greater choices and lower prices.

Thank you for your consideration of the above mentioned legislation. Please contact Nate Herman at 703-797-9062 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Steve Lamar
Executive Vice President