

NEWS RELEASE

Distilled Spirits Council is the trade association representing producers and marketers of distilled spirits sold in the United States.

Website: <http://www.distilledspirits.org>

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Distilled Spirits Council Urges Congress to Support U.S.–Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement

WASHINGTON, DC – The Distilled Spirits Council today announced its support for the Colombia Free Trade agreement and urged its swift passage in Congress. The agreement will result in the immediate elimination of Colombia's 20% *ad valorem* tariff on U.S.-origin brandy, gin, liqueurs and certain other spirits.

"We applaud the Bush administration for continuing to include important protections for American spirits in these trade agreements and call on members of Congress to support these efforts," said Distilled Spirits Council Senior Vice President Debbie Lamb, who noted Congress has 90 legislative days to vote on the agreement.

Tariffs on other categories of spirits with U.S.-origin including whiskey, rum and vodka will be phased-out in equal annual stages over 10 years after the agreement enters into force.

Pact Provides Important Protections for American Whiskeys

Under the pact, Colombia has also agreed to recognize Bourbon and Tennessee Whiskey as distinctive products of the United States.

"This agreement provides important protections for Bourbon and Tennessee Whiskey, which account for 70 percent of U.S. spirits exports worldwide," said Lamb. "These safeguards will benefit both producers and consumers by ensuring that only genuine Bourbon and Tennessee Whiskey produced in the United States, in accordance with U.S. laws and regulations, will be available in the Colombia market."

Lamb stated that U.S. spirits exports to Colombia totaled \$1 million in 2007, up 94 percent from 2006.