



EMERGENCY COMMITTEE FOR AMERICAN TRADE

News Release

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ECAT URGES REDOUBLED EFFORTS TO BREAK IMPASSE ON U.S.-COLOMBIA TRADE PROMOTION AGREEMENT

Washington, D.C., April 10, 2008: Calman Cohen, President of the Emergency Committee for American Trade (ECAT), issued the following statement today on the consideration of the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement (TPA):

“ECAT urges redoubled efforts to break the impasse on Congressional consideration of the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement. This high-standard agreement is very much in the United States’ and Colombia’s interests and deserves a vote as soon as possible this year.

“The House is preparing today to take the unprecedented step of removing so-called fast track or Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) procedures from the U.S.-Colombia trade agreement. These procedures, first developed by Congress over 30 years ago, essentially represent a compromise between Administration and Congressional constitutional prerogatives: The Constitution grants the President authority to conduct foreign-policy negotiations, including negotiations related to international trade agreements, yet directly provides Congress the authority "to regulate Commerce with foreign nations." Since the creation of this framework in the Trade Act of 1974, Democratic and Republican Administrations and Congresses have successfully used these procedures to open markets for U.S. farmers, manufacturers, service providers and their workers, promoting economic growth in the United States and a higher standard of living.

“The proposed elimination of this 30-year framework is simply not in the United States’ interest. Indeed, rejection of this framework as it applies to Colombia will undermine U.S. credibility in negotiations for decades to come, making it more difficult for the United States to level the playing field, eliminate foreign trade barriers and open foreign markets to our goods and services. ECAT urges the rejection of this proposal.

“Some in Congress have expressed concerns with the Administration’s own process of sending up the Colombia agreement without first reaching an accord with the Congress on its consideration, as well as other issues of concern, most notably the renewal and expansion of Trade Adjustment Assistance.

“In the end, however, the U.S.-Colombia trade agreement is not about process. It is about creating economic opportunities for Americans and promoting America’s economic and strategic interests in our own hemisphere. ECAT urges both Congress and the Administration to redouble their efforts to find a path forward so that both the House and Senate can vote on the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement as soon as possible this year.”

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Founded in 1967, ECAT is an organization of the heads of leading U.S. international business enterprises representing all major sectors of the American economy. Their annual worldwide sales total over \$2.8 trillion and they employ more than six million persons. ECAT’s purpose is to promote economic growth through the expansion of international trade and investment.