



CHARLIE CRIST
GOVERNOR

October 11, 2007

The Honorable Mel Martinez
United States Senate
317 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Martinez:

Mel:

On behalf of the State of Florida, I urge you to support the free trade agreements with Peru, Panama, and Colombia that are to be considered by Congress this year. As the "Gateway of the Americas," Florida supports eliminating barriers to global commerce and promoting trade policies that will benefit the residents of Florida as well as our entire nation.

The agreements with Peru, Panama and Colombia are vital to expanding Florida's economy, as well as reaffirming our economic and cultural relationship with Latin America. These agreements will go far to enhance current reciprocal trade relationships. In recent years, Florida has enjoyed a substantial trade relationship with these nations, combining for two-way trade valued at over \$7 billion in 2006. Expansion of our economic partnership with these nations will boost exports and create the foundation for more than 8,000 new jobs across our state.

Increased trade between Florida and Latin American nations will also boost our state's ability to compete in the global economy. Small- and medium-sized enterprises, which constitute an overwhelming amount of Florida's business community, are reliant on trade promotion legislation. The level playing field created by these compacts allows access to the global market that otherwise would be difficult for these businesses to achieve. Floridian businesses appreciate and value the tremendous benefits of free trade and are eager for the implementation of the agreements.

Again, I would like to urge you to support these critical free trade agreements, which will help allow Floridians to enjoy fair and equal access to the global market place.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature of Charlie Crist in black ink.

Charlie Crist

CC/cs