

MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

March 18, 2008

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Majority Leader
US Senate
S-221 – Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
US Senate
S-230 – Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
US House of Representatives
H-232 – Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John A. Boehner
House Minority Leader
US House of Representatives
H-204 – Capitol.
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader Boehner:

We write to urge you to pursue Congressional passage as soon as possible of the United States-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement. The US-Colombia FTA is both critical to Miami-Dade County's and Florida's trade-based economy, creating jobs and well-being in the short and long-term, and helping America address the growing political instability in the Andean region.

As you know, Miami-Dade County's Airport and Seaport are among America's most active and important international gateways. We rely on free trade agreements to promote and grow international commerce in an increasingly interdependent and competitive world. The US-Colombia FTA will open the Colombian market to US exporters on par with the duty-free treatment that so many Colombian exports already enjoy under the Andean Trade Preferences and Drug Enforcement Act (ATPDEA). In addition, this agreement would allow a framework for constructive government-to-government relationships that will assist in the fight against terrorism and illicit narcotics trafficking while expanding trade and investment, which will create jobs for Florida and Miami-Dade County.

Miami-Dade County is proud to be the "Gateway to the Americas." In the past few years, Miami-Dade's Customs district has seen one of the biggest trade surpluses in the country, with trade paramount to our economic growth and development. In 2006, total trade between Miami and Latin America and the Caribbean was \$52.2 billion with \$26.8 billion in trade with South America alone.

Colombia is Miami-Dade County's fourth largest trading partner and the number one point of entry for Colombian products. For example, Colombia's fresh cut flowers are one of Miami-Dade County's top imports representing a value of \$800 million annually. This industry, with nationwide reach here at home and an important source of alternative jobs to illicit drug production in Colombia, would be significantly and adversely affected were the trade agreement not approved. This impacts real jobs here in Miami-Dade County and the State of Florida. Further, the State of Florida's exports to Colombia accounted for 23 percent of US exports to Colombia during the last two years in areas such as agriculture, transportation equipment, and electronic products.

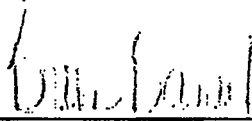
STEPHEN P. CLARK CENTER, 111 N.W. FIRST STREET, MIAMI, FLORIDA 33128-1994

We thank you for your prompt attention to this urgent matter that affects tens of millions of Americans, millions of Floridians and hundreds of millions of freedom-loving individuals throughout the Western Hemisphere.

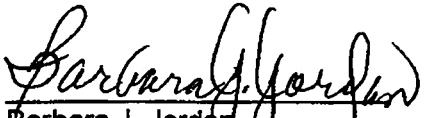
Sincerely,



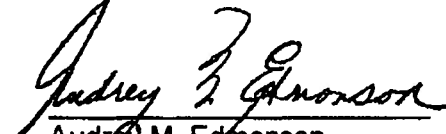
Carlos Alvarez
Mayor, Miami-Dade County



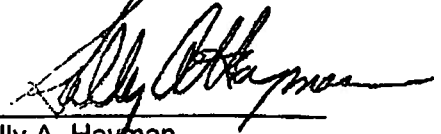
Bruno Barreiro
Chairman, Board of County Commissioners, District 3



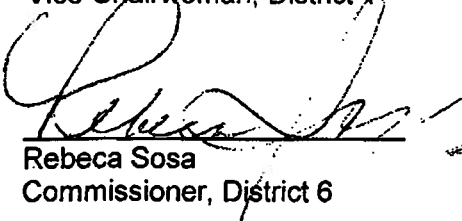
Barbara J. Jordan
Vice Chairwoman, District 1



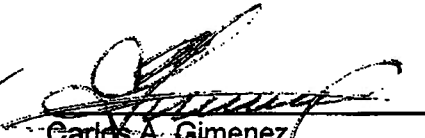
Audrey M. Edmonson
Commissioner, District 3



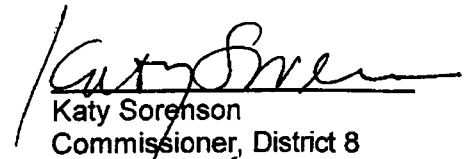
Sally A. Heyman
Commissioner, District 4



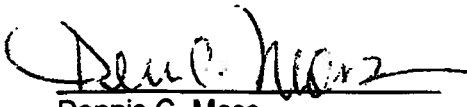
Rebeca Sosa
Commissioner, District 6



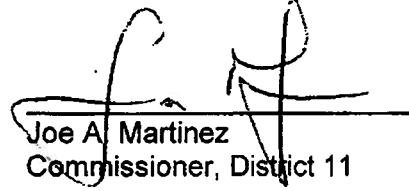
Carlos A. Gimenez
Commissioner, District 7



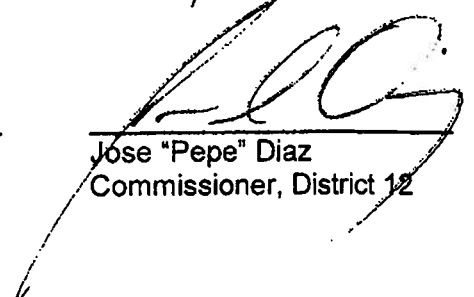
Katy Sorenson
Commissioner, District 8



Dennis C. Moss
Commissioner, District 9



Joe A. Martinez
Commissioner, District 11



Jose "Pepe" Diaz
Commissioner, District 12

- c: Florida Congressional Delegation
Senator Max Baucus
Senator Charles E. Grassley
Congressman Charles B. Rangle
Congressman Jim McCrery