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NEMA Calls on Congress to Ratify U.S.-Colombia FTA As Soon As Possible

ROSSLYN, Va., April 8, 2008—The National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA) strongly supports ratification of the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement (FTA), for which President Bush sent legislation to Capitol Hill today. The reasons for endorsing the Agreement are clear:

- Trade and U.S. Exports: “A few weeks ago Congress renewed Colombia’s duty-free electrical equipment access to the U.S. market through the Andean Trade Preference Act (ATPA),” observed NEMA President and CEO Evan Gaddis. “Why shouldn’t Congress want to level the playing field by giving our industry duty-free access to Colombia, especially since we already run a two-way sectoral surplus that stands to improve even further under the FTA?” Indeed, the electroindustry has typically seen large bilateral export gains with all the U.S.’s FTA partners, including those in Latin America.
- Colombia: President Uribe and Washington’s “Plan Colombia” have made conditions considerably better in recent years. The country now has a fast-growing market economy and the further economic development to be fostered by this FTA would help the trends continue in the right direction. Further, the Agreement includes new labor and environmental provisions endorsed by leaders on Capitol Hill and approved already by the Colombian government and legislature. Recent events in the Andes have shown that Bogota is on the front lines of the battle for the future of Latin America, and the need to support our arguably best friend in the region is more than evident.

Indeed, “this is a very important deal for the overall bilateral relationship and our industry in particular,” stressed Gaddis. “Our elected officials need to come out and show their support.”

NEMA is the trade association of choice for the electrical manufacturing industry. Founded in 1926 and headquartered near Washington, D.C., its approximately 450 member companies manufacture products used in the generation, transmission and distribution, control, and end-use of electricity. These products are used in utility, medical imaging, industrial, commercial,

institutional, and residential applications. Domestic production of electrical products sold worldwide exceeds \$120 billion. In addition to its headquarters in Rosslyn, Virginia, NEMA also has offices in Beijing, São Paulo, and Mexico City.

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