

## COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

March 7, 2011

Hon. Ambassador Ron Kirk  
United States Trade Representative  
600 17th Street NW  
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Ambassador Kirk:

Thank you for your letter dated today in which you state that the Administration wants to begin technical discussions on the South Korean trade agreement “without delay.”

I am eager to begin these important and complex technical discussions, despite some media accounts to the contrary – in fact, the Ways and Means Majority and Minority staffs have such a discussion already scheduled with USTR for later today.

Your letter is completely silent on our pending agreements with Colombia and Panama. As you know, I strongly believe that all three agreements should be considered by Congress by July 1, and I have repeatedly urged the Administration to advance the Colombia and Panama agreements.

We are facing increasing competitive disadvantages in all three of these markets, and July 1 is a critical date. As you have so properly noted many times in the past, we expect the EU-South Korea agreement to enter into effect on that date. In addition, we expect the Canada-Colombia agreement to enter into effect on July 1 too, making that date critical for the U.S.-Colombia agreement as well.

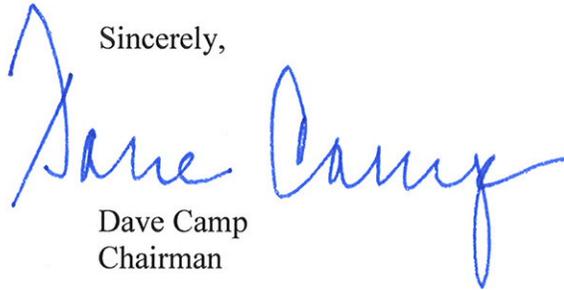
All three agreements are important to U.S. strategic and economic interests and will help support jobs here in the United States – 250,000 jobs using the President’s own measure. Given our continued high unemployment rate, we must explore all possible opportunities to sell to the world and create and support existing jobs in the United States.

Not only will these agreements create new opportunities abroad, I am equally concerned that the failure to move them will severely disadvantage U.S. businesses, workers, farmers, and ranchers who now sell their products in these markets. We have already seen U.S. market share drop precipitously for key agriculture commodities in Colombia while Argentina’s market share has increased because its agreement with Colombia has entered into effect. The need to move ahead is urgent.

Yet, despite repeated bipartisan requests, the Administration still has not identified outstanding issues relating to these two agreements, reasonable steps to address those issues, and a timeframe for resolution. All three pending trade agreements enjoy broad bipartisan and support on the Hill. Senior leadership from both parties has made clear that they believe that the need for action on these agreements is urgent. For more than two years, the Administration has been saying that it is “developing a plan of action to address the pending trade agreements in consultation with Congress. We ... plan to establish benchmarks for progress on the Colombian [FTA] ...” [President’s Trade Agenda, released February 27, 2009]. While you have testified before my Committee that you are “intensifying” action on the Colombia and Panama agreements, we have not seen concrete results. The Administration’s lack of action is inexplicable.

The time for action is now. Therefore, I again request that you submit your action plan for advancing the Colombia and Panama agreements.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dave Camp". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "D".

Dave Camp  
Chairman