RPFMA

Rubber and Plastic Footwear Manufacturers Association

STATEMENT OF
RUBBER AND PLASTIC FOOTWEAR MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION
REGARDING VARIOUS MISCELLANEOUS TARIFF BILLS

The Rubber and Plastic Footwear Manufacturers Association, which represents domestic footwear producers, has objected to the following miscellaneous tariff bills, among others: H.R. 4891, H.R. 4892, H.R. 4893, H.R. 4894, H.R. 4895, and H.R. 4896, introduced by Rep. Carnahan; and H.R. 4993, H.R. 4994, H.R. 4995, and H.R. 5330, introduced by Rep. Bonamici and the Senate versions of Ms. Bonamici's bills, S. 3055, S. 3056, S. 3057, and S. 3058, introduced by Sen. Wyden.

The eight digit Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) numbers cited in these bills are identical to HTS numbers that include footwear manufactured in the United States. RPFMA is generally concerned whenever an overlap like this occurs in the context of tariff reductions. On the other hand, our member companies currently do not manufacture footwear that is directly competitive with the footwear described in these particular bills. RPFMA has objected to other bills which would reduce tariffs on footwear that is directly competitive with footwear that is domestically produced.

RPFMA has a general concern with the impact of the MTB bills on footwear tariff negotiations occurring in the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) discussions. Vietnam, a TPP member state, has taken the position that the Administration should eliminate the sensitive footwear tariffs that help to even the playing field for U.S. manufacturers. Elimination of tariffs on sensitive, domestically produced products would effectively end footwear manufacturing in the United States. If Congress reduces or eliminates footwear duties generally in a Miscellaneous Tariff Bill, it could undermine the ability of the U.S. negotiators in the TPP context to provide tariff concessions on non-sensitive footwear because those tariffs will already have been reduced, at least on a temporary basis. This, in turn, would increase the pressure on the United States to reduce or eliminate tariffs on sensitive footwear, which would devastate our domestic industry and eliminate most, if not all, of the remaining footwear manufacturing in the United States. For these reasons, we continue to object to the Carnahan, Bonamici and Wyden bills.

Contacts: Marc L. Fleischaker
fleischaker.marc@arentfox.com
202-857-6053

James A. Hunter
hunter.jamie@arentfox.com
202-775-5752