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U.S. House of Representatives

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October 9, 2008

The Honorable Shara L. Aranoff
Chairman
U.S. International Trade Commission
500 E Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20436

Dear Chairman Aranoff:

Textile and apparel imports from China increased dramatically beginning on January 1, 2005, following the termination of import restrictions under the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing of the World Trade Organization. That surge in imports injured businesses, workers and communities in the United States and in other countries, particularly in poorer developing nations.

The United States sought to provide a more stable and predictable trading environment by entering into an agreement with China in November 2005, to limit textile and apparel imports from China, under the Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Trade in Textile and Apparel Products (the "Textile and Apparel MOU"). That agreement expires on December 31, 2008.

Like many textile and apparel producers and workers in the United States and in other countries, and like many other Members of Congress, I am concerned that a market disrupting surge in textile and apparel imports from China could occur when the Textile and Apparel MOU expires – just as occurred on the expiration of the WTO Agreement on Textiles and Clothing less than four years ago. Unfortunately, however, the Administration does not appear to be taking these concerns seriously.

The Committee on Ways and Means has a clear interest in and a responsibility to examine this issue and take action, if warranted. Among other things, the Committee has the authority under section 421(b) of the Trade Act

of 1974 to direct an investigation to determine whether imports from China are causing or are threatening to cause market disruption in the United States, as provided under China's Protocol of Accession to the World Trade Organization. In addition, the Committee also oversees the administration of the antidumping and countervailing duty laws. The Committee also oversees various trade preference programs for developing countries, and it continues to monitor the operation and success of those programs. To meet those responsibilities, the Committee must first have accurate and timely information regarding the relevant imports.

Therefore, on behalf of the Committee on Ways and Means of the United States House of Representatives, and under the authority of section 332(g) of the Tariff Act of 1930, I request that the Commission initiate an investigation to provide the Committee with statistical reports on the volume, value, unit value, and import market share of certain textile and apparel imports from China. The Commission is asked to compile these data for each product covered by the Textile and Apparel MOU, at both the three-digit textile/apparel category level and at the level of the 10-digit Harmonized Tariff Schedule for each product within each of the three-digit textile/apparel categories. To the extent practicable and within a reasonable time after data become available, the Commission will provide the Committee with preliminary Customs data once every two weeks and will post these reports on its website. In addition, when updated final Census data become available, the Commission should include the final data in the appropriate report. The Committee notes that the Commission has been asked on several occasions in the past to generate reports of this type (on products ranging from agricultural products to steel).

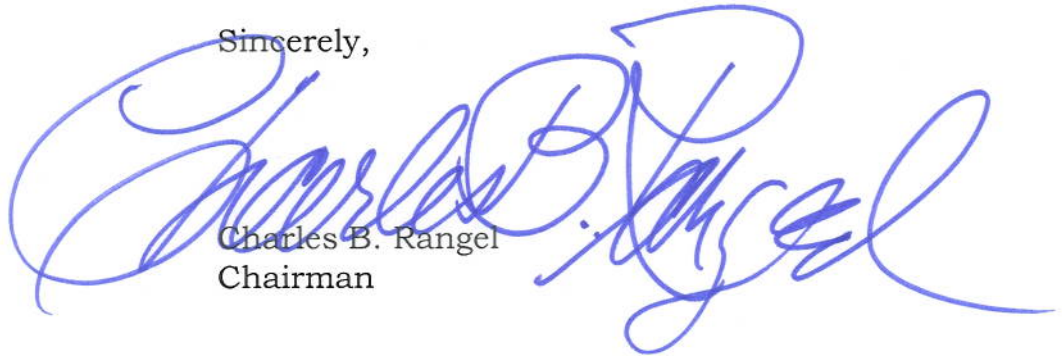
I request that the first report be provided to the Committee by December 1, 2008, and that that report include a historical compilation of the volume, value, unit value, and import market share of the articles specified above dating from January 1, 2003, to the most recent month available. Subsequently, the Commission should provide the Committee with reports as the preliminary and final data become available. In addition, the Commission should publish a compilation of the monthly reports of the final Census data on an annual basis. Finally, I request that the Commission continue to provide these reports until such time that the Committee terminates or amends this request.

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To be clear, the Committee is not requesting at this time any analysis of the import data, nor is the Committee directing the Commission to initiate a section 421 investigation. The Committee simply is seeking the statistical data that will allow the Committee to monitor the volume and unit values of textile and apparel imports from China to determine whether a more comprehensive investigation is appropriate. The Committee understands that these data already have been compiled and are available. The Committee simply seeks that the data be reported in the format requested.

Thank you, in advance, for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Charles B. Rangel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with large loops and flourishes.

Charles B. Rangel
Chairman