



U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

Finance

SENATOR CHUCK GRASSLEY, OF IOWA - CHAIRMAN

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For Immediate Release

Thursday, Dec. 22, 2005

Grassley Urges Portman to Notify Congress of U.S.-Peru Free Trade Agreement

WASHINGTON – Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Committee on Finance, with Senate jurisdiction over international trade, today urged United States Trade Representative Rob Portman to notify Congress of his intent to have the United States enter into a free trade agreement with Peru. Grassley said the timely notification is important to ensure timely congressional consideration of the trade agreement next year and should not wait for the conclusion of trade agreement negotiations with Colombia or Ecuador. The text of Grassley's letter to Portman follows here.

December 22, 2005

The Honorable Rob Portman
United States Trade Representative
Office of the U.S. Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW, Room 215
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Ambassador Portman:

Congratulations on completing negotiations on a free trade agreement with Peru. This comprehensive agreement will promote economic growth and prosperity in both the United States and Peru. I am especially pleased with the broad market access commitments on agriculture, which will greatly benefit agricultural exporters in my home state of Iowa.

I strongly support efforts to conclude similar comprehensive and far-reaching agreements with both Colombia and Ecuador. I am hopeful negotiations with these countries conclude soon so that they may join with Peru to form an Andean free trade area.

However, I urge you not to wait for conclusion of negotiations with Colombia or Ecuador before formally notifying Congress of your intent to enter into a free trade agreement with Peru. As you know, formal notification of intent to enter into a free trade agreement is required by Section 2105(A)(1)(a) of the Trade Act of 2002 in order for an agreement to receive expedited consideration under Trade Promotion Authority procedures. The statute further requires that ninety calendar days elapse before the United States can actually enter into a free trade agreement. Therefore at least ninety days must elapse before Congress can even begin implementation of the agreement under Trade Promotion Authority procedures. In order to ensure timely implementation of the agreement by Congress next year, I urge

you to send the formal notice of intent to enter into a free trade agreement with Peru soon.

Should negotiations with Colombia or Ecuador conclude in the short-term, a second notification of intent could be sent and the agreements could be considered together. However, I do not believe that consideration of the Peruvian free trade agreement should be delayed in the event that negotiations with Colombia or Ecuador are delayed.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Grassley
Chairman, Senate Finance Committee