

June 22, 1998

UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20436

MEMORANDUM TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON PROPOSED TARIFF LEGISLATION¹

Bill no., sponsor, and sponsor's state: H.R. 3349 (105th Congress) Representative Talent (MO).

Companion bill: None.

Title as introduced: To suspend temporarily the duty on a certain chemical used in the textile industry.

Summary of bill:²

Suspends through December 31, 2000, the most-favored-nation (MFN) rate of duty on imports of the chemical Phosphonic acid, (1-hydroxyethylidene)bis-, tetrasodium salt.

Effective date: The 15th day after enactment.

Retroactive effect: None.

Statement of purpose:

The sponsor made no statement in the *Congressional Record* at the time the bill was introduced. A spokesman for the Solutia Company³ stated that there are two other U.S. producers of this product. According to the spokesman, "the current minimalistic duty of 3.7% does not protect the largest U.S. manufacturer, nor the company engaged in partial manufacture, where additional equitable considerations concerning duty-free import of the major component come into play."

Product description and uses:

Phosphonic acid,
(1-hydroxyethylidene)bis-,
tetrasodium salt:

A synthetic organic chemical (CAS No. 2809-21-4) used in the textile industry as an enhancement additive in the bleaching process and, in a powdered version, as a water softener in detergents.

¹ Industry analyst: Eric Land (205-3349); attorney: Leo Webb (205-2599).

² See appendix A for definitions of tariff and trade agreement terms.

³ Fax from Mr. James R. Enyart of Solutia, Inc., dated April 15, 1998.

Tariff treatment:⁴

<u>Product</u>	<u>HTS subheading</u>	<u>Col. 1-general rate of duty</u>
Phosphonic acid, (1-hydroxyethylidene)bis-, tetrasodium salt:.....	2931.00.90	3.7% ad. val.

Structure of domestic industry (including competing products):

Phosphonic acid
(1-hydroxyethylidene)bis-,
tetrasodium salt:

There are 3 companies active in the marketing of phosphonic acid compounds in the domestic market. Of these three, Solutia and Vulcan Chemical Company manufacture in the United States. The third company, Albright & Wilson (A&W), produces a precursor material (reportedly valued at approximately 70 percent of the value of the final product) at its facility in the United Kingdom (UK). A&W then exports the precursor product from the UK to the United States duty-free and completes the manufacture of the final product domestically. The Commission is unaware of any competing products for this material.

Private-sector views:

The Commission contacted Solutia, Inc., along with the Vulcan Chemical Company of Birmingham, AL, and Albright & Wilson of Richmond, VA. No written comments had been received as of the date of preparation of this report.

⁴See appendix B for column 1-special and column 2 duty rates.

U.S. consumption:

Phosphonic acid (1-hydroxyethylidene)bis-,
tetrasodium salt:

	<u>1994</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1996</u>
		-----(\$1,000)-----	
U.S. production.....	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)
U.S. imports ²	400	350	300
U.S. exports.....	0	0	0
Apparent U.S. consumption.....	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)

Principal import sources: United Kingdom.

Principal export markets: None.

¹Not available

²Estimated by Commission staff based on information provided by Solutia, Inc.

Effect on customs revenue:⁵

Future (1998-2000) effect:

<u>Product</u>	<u>Estimated average annual revenue loss</u>		
	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
	-----(\$1,000)-----		
Phosphonic acid (1-hydroxyethylidene)bis-, tetrasodium salt.....	15	12	10

Retroactive effect: None.

Technical comments:

Since the intent of this bill is to suspend the current MFN duty, the duty rate listed in the description of proposed HTS heading 9902.61.06 should be "Free" instead of "3.7%." Also, the CAS number listed in the bill for phosphonic acid, (1-hydroxyethylidene)bis-, tetrasodium salt, should be corrected to read: 3794-83-0. Finally, the HTS number should be 2931.00.90.

⁵ Actual revenue loss may be understated in the event of a significant increase in imports over the duty suspension period. Estimated annual revenue losses were calculated by Commission staff based on import data provided by Mr. James R. Enyart of Solutia, Inc. using the appropriate staged rates of duties as published in the *Federal Register*, Wednesday, Jan. 4, 1995.

APPENDIX A

TARIFF AND TRADE AGREEMENT TERMS

In the **Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States** (HTS), chapters 1 through 97 cover all goods in trade and incorporate in the tariff nomenclature the internationally adopted Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System through the 6-digit level of product description. Subordinate 8-digit product subdivisions, either enacted by Congress or proclaimed by the President, allow more narrowly applicable duty rates; 10-digit administrative statistical reporting numbers provide data of national interest. Chapters 98 and 99 contain special U.S. classifications and temporary rate provisions, respectively. The HTS replaced the **Tariff Schedules of the United States** (TSUS) effective January 1, 1989.

Duty rates in the **general** subcolumn of HTS column 1 are most-favored-nation (MFN) rates, many of which have been eliminated or are being reduced as concessions resulting from the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations. Column 1-general duty rates apply to all countries except those enumerated in HTS general note 3(b) (Afghanistan, Cuba, Laos, North Korea, and Vietnam), which are subject to the statutory rates set forth in **column 2**. Specified goods from designated MFN-eligible countries may be eligible for reduced rates of duty or for duty-free entry under one or more preferential tariff programs. Such tariff treatment is set forth in the **special** subcolumn of HTS rate of duty column 1 or in the general notes. If eligibility for special tariff rates is not claimed or established, goods are dutiable at column 1-general rates. The HTS does not enumerate those countries as to which a total or partial embargo has been declared.

The **Generalized System of Preferences** (GSP) affords nonreciprocal tariff preferences to developing countries to aid their economic development and to diversify and expand their production and exports. The U.S. GSP, enacted in title V of the Trade Act of 1974 for 10 years and extended several times thereafter, applies to merchandise imported on or after January 1, 1976 and before the close of June 30, 1998. Indicated by the symbol "A", "A*", or "A+" in the special subcolumn, the GSP provides duty-free entry to eligible articles the product of and imported directly from designated beneficiary developing countries, as set forth in general note 4 to the HTS.

The **Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act** (CBERA) affords nonreciprocal tariff preferences to developing countries in the Caribbean Basin area to aid their economic development and to diversify and expand their production and exports. The CBERA, enacted in title II of Public Law 98-67, implemented by Presidential Proclamation 5133 of November 30, 1983, and amended by the Customs and Trade Act of 1990, applies to merchandise entered, or withdrawn from warehouse for consumption, on or after January 1, 1984. Indicated by the symbol "E" or "E*" in the special subcolumn, the CBERA provides duty-free entry to eligible articles, and reduced-duty treatment to certain other articles, which are the product of and imported directly from designated countries, as set forth in general note 7 to the HTS.

Free rates of duty in the special subcolumn followed by the symbol "IL" are applicable to products of Israel under the **United States-Israel Free Trade Area Implementation Act** of 1985 (IFTA), as provided in general note 8 to the HTS.

Preferential nonreciprocal duty-free or reduced-duty treatment in the special subcolumn followed by the symbol "J" or "J*" in parentheses is afforded to eligible articles the product of designated beneficiary countries under the **Andean Trade Preference Act** (ATPA), enacted as title II of Public Law 102-182 and implemented by Presidential Proclamation 6455 of July 2, 1992 (effective July 22, 1992), as set forth in general note 11 to the HTS.

Preferential or free rates of duty in the special subcolumn followed by the symbol "CA" are applicable to eligible goods of Canada, and rates followed by the symbol "MX" are applicable to eligible goods of Mexico, under the **North American Free Trade Agreement**, as provided in general note 12 to the HTS and implemented effective January 1, 1994

by Presidential Proclamation 6641 of December 15, 1993. Goods must originate in the NAFTA region under rules set forth in general note 12(t) and meet other requirements of the note and applicable regulations.

Other special tariff treatment applies to particular **products of insular possessions** (general note 3(a)(iv)), **products of the West Bank and Gaza Strip** (general note 3(a)(v)), goods covered by the **Automotive Products Trade Act** (APTA) (general note 5) and the **Agreement on Trade in Civil Aircraft** (ATCA) (general note 6), **articles imported from freely associated states** (general note 10), **pharmaceutical products** (general note 13), and **intermediate chemicals for dyes** (general note 14).

The **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994** (GATT 1994), pursuant to the Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization, is based upon the earlier GATT 1947 (61 Stat. (pt. 5) A58; 8 UST (pt. 2) 1786) as the primary multilateral system of disciplines and principles governing international trade. Signatories' obligations under both the 1994 and 1947 agreements focus upon most-favored-nation treatment, the maintenance of scheduled concession rates of duty, and national treatment for imported products; the GATT also provides the legal framework for customs valuation standards, "escape clause" (emergency) actions, antidumping and countervailing duties, dispute settlement, and other measures. The results of the Uruguay Round of multilateral tariff negotiations are set forth by way of separate schedules of concessions for each participating contracting party, with the U.S. schedule designated as Schedule XX.

Pursuant to the **Agreement on Textiles and Clothing** (ATC) of the GATT 1994, member countries are phasing out restrictions on imports under the prior "Arrangement Regarding International Trade in Textiles" (known as the **Multifiber Arrangement** (MFA)). Under the MFA, which was a departure from GATT 1947 provisions, importing and exporting countries negotiated bilateral agreements limiting textile and apparel shipments, and importing countries could take unilateral action in the absence or violation of an agreement. Quantitative limits had been established on imported textiles and apparel of cotton, other vegetable fibers, wool, man-made fibers or silk blends in an effort to prevent or limit market disruption in the importing countries. The ATC establishes notification and safeguard procedures, along with other rules concerning the customs treatment of textile and apparel shipments, and calls for the eventual complete integration of this sector into the GATT 1994 over a ten-year period, or by Jan. 1, 2005.

Rev. 8/12/97

APPENDIX B

**SELECTED PORTIONS OF THE
HARMONIZED TARIFF SCHEDULE OF THE UNITED STATES**

(Appendix not included in the electronic version of this report.)

105TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 3349

To suspend temporarily the duty on a certain chemical used in the textile industry.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 5, 1998

Mr. TALENT introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means

A BILL

To suspend temporarily the duty on a certain chemical used in the textile industry.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SUSPENSION OF DUTY.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 99 of
5 the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States is
6 amended by inserting in numerical sequence the following
7 new heading:

“	9902.61.06	Phosphonic acid,(1-hydroxyethylidene)bis-, tetrasodium salt (CAS No. 2794-83-0) (provided for in subheading 2931.00.9030)	3.7%	No change	No change	On or before 12/31/2000	”.
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1 (b) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendment made by
2 this section applies to articles entered, or withdrawn from
3 warehouse for consumption, on or after the 15th day after
4 the date of the enactment of this Act.

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