



October 16, 2002

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman, Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510-6200

Dear Mr. Chairman:

On September 23, 2002, we sent you a letter, with an enclosed matrix, setting forth the Administration's positions regarding a number of miscellaneous tariff bills on which the Committee has requested comment. Upon further review, the Administration has no objection, if the suspension period is amended, to the following bills that were included in that package: S. 2290, S. 2292, S. 2293, S. 2298, S. 2299, S. 2300, S. 2301, and S. 2543.

An Administration position of "no objection, if the suspension period is amended" means that the Administration does not oppose the bill provided that the term of the temporary tariff reduction does not extend beyond December 31, 2005. We oppose any longer suspension period at a time when the United States is engaged in multilateral trade negotiations that provide opportunities to gain concessions from other countries and export opportunities for U.S. manufacturers. Longer suspension periods would reduce U.S. trade negotiators' bargaining leverage in negotiations to gain reciprocity for U.S. duty changes.

The Office of Management and Budget advises that there is no objection to the submission of this report to Congress from the standpoint of the Administration's program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Theodore W. Kassinger".

Theodore W. Kassinger

cc: The Honorable Charles Grassley
The Honorable Jack Reed
The Honorable Lincoln Chafee