



May 5, 2006

The Honorable John Boehner
House Majority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Leader:

We are writing to express strong support for legislation that would expand the trade relationship with Haiti known as the Haitian Hemispheric Opportunity through Partnership Encouragement (HOPE) Act that has been crafted by House Ways and Means Chairman Bill Thomas, Trade Subcommittee Chairman Clay Shaw, and Ranking Member Charlie Rangel.

We believe passage of this legislation would be especially timely, given the recent elections in Haiti and the upcoming inaugural for President-elect Preval.

As you know, Haiti has been mired in a vicious cycle of civil strife and political instability that has created a desperate situation. It is our hope that the May 14 inauguration of President-elect Preval will constitute a fresh start for this country.

Ultimately, we need to focus on many areas to improve the lot of Haitians and to make Haiti a more stable environment. This includes creating jobs, improving the security situation in the country; rebuilding critical infrastructure, such as ports and roads; and reinforcing democratic institutions and the rule of law.

The HOPE bill is a modest but important step toward those goals. It will expand upon the preference program already in place by fostering new incentives for companies to maintain and create jobs in the apparel sector. Moreover, the legislation will do so in a way that does not adversely affect U.S. textile interests.

We encourage you to make time in the Congressional calendar so the HOPE legislation can be quickly taken up, approved, and enacted.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA)
Caribbean - Central American Action (C-CAA)
US Chamber of Commerce