

COALITION FOR GSP
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 22, 2009

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**AMERICAN COMPANIES, DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS CALL FOR
RENEWAL, EXPANSION OF PREFERENCE PROGRAMS**

WASHINGTON, DC (April 22, 2009) – Members of the Coalition for GSP joined today with a broad group of business and development-focused non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to ask Congress and the Obama administration to renew immediately expiring trade preference programs and then reform all such programs in ways that maximize their benefits to developing countries and American companies and workers.

“The Generalized System of Preferences has become an integral part of the sourcing plans for U.S. companies,” said Laura Baughman, Executive Director of the Coalition for GSP. “However, the patchwork of regional programs, including GSP, that has cropped up over the last 30 years creates a confusing, burdensome system for importers. GSP itself is deficient in many ways: it is complicated and doesn’t apply to many products of key interest to importers.”

In letters to Congress and the Administration, the group called for the replacement of all U.S. preference programs with one new program that builds on the successes of the current preferences and repairs the provisions that have limited their use. These changes include an expansion of product coverage and simplified implementation procedures, as well as enhanced benefits for the most needy countries. All current preference beneficiaries also would continue to receive duty-free access to the U.S. market.

“The organizations signing these letters represent varied constituencies, but we each agree that it’s time for the United States to update its preference programs for the 21st century to the benefit of both importers and developing countries,” added Baughman. “Fleshing out the details of a new preference program is the next step, and this will require time and creative thought. So Congress must renew existing, expiring preference programs immediately so that careful discussion of reform is not hurried by the expiration deadlines.” GSP and the Andean preference program expire at the end of 2009.

The Coalition for GSP is a group of American companies and trade associations organized to educate policy makers and others about the important benefits of the GSP program to American companies, workers, and consumers. More information about the Coalition for GSP – as well as copies of the letters – can be found at http://tradepartnership.com/site/coalition_gsp.html.