



September 15, 2009

Via Online Submission www.regulations.gov

Ms. Gloria Blue
Executive Secretary, Trade Policy Staff Committee
Office of the U.S. Trade Representative
600 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

RE: USTR's Request for Comments: Free Trade Agreement with the Colombia

Dear Ms. Blue:

In response to the Federal Register notice issued on July 29, 2009, the Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA) and its hundreds of member companies would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit comments regarding a U.S.-Colombia free trade agreement (FTA).

TIA represents manufacturers and suppliers of information and communications technology (ICT) products and services for the global marketplace through its core competencies in standards development, domestic and international advocacy, and market development and trade promotion programs. Members' products and services empower communications in every industry and market, including healthcare, education, security, public safety, transportation, government, the military, the environment and entertainment. For over 80 years, the association has facilitated the convergence of new communications networks while working for a competitive and innovative market environment.

Implementing free trade agreements is one solution in helping build a strong, global, digital economy. Passage of the Colombia FTA would eliminate duties on eighty percent of U.S. exports of consumer and industrial products to Colombia, and an additional seven percent of U.S. exports would receive duty-free treatment within five years of implementation. In 2007, telecommunications equipment trade with Colombia was valued at \$245 million, with \$232 million in U.S. exports. We fully expect these exports to increase with passage of the FTA.

TIA supports the passage of the Colombia FTA as it would benefit ICT manufacturers, suppliers and service providers of both countries by establishing greater market access, assuring a rules-based and predictable business climate and encouraging further bilateral investment. Important provisions to the ICT sector established within the Agreement include: 1) Reaffirmation of Colombia's commitment to the WTO's Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreement which eliminates any unjustified TBT measures; 2) Colombia



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joining as a signatory to the WTO Information Technology Agreement, which eliminates tariffs on ICTs; 3) establishing an independent telecommunications regulatory body; 4) rules requiring customs operations to be conducted with transparency, efficiency, and predictability, and that customs laws, regulations, decisions, and rulings be not applied in a manner that would create unwarranted procedural obstacles to international trade; 5) providing full market access and national treatment for services supplied cross-border and through commercial presence for basic telecommunications and value-added network services; and 6) reducing onerous regulations to create a flexible environment for companies to react appropriately to market forces and seize opportunities to expand services and technologies in a competitive and technology neutral manner.

The passage of the Colombia FTA will provide new export opportunities for the U.S. information and communications industry, foster economic growth and create higher paying jobs in the United States by reducing and eliminating barriers to trade and investment. The United States already has considerable economic ties to Colombia and a significant stake in the success of the country. The U.S. stands to gain substantially from a lowering of barriers in the market, as there is much unrealized potential for U.S. exports.

TIA wishes to express its appreciation to USTR for its efforts on behalf of the U.S. ICT industry. It is important that the United States continue its efforts, both bilaterally and multilaterally, to bring about a fully competitive world market for ICT equipment. We look forward to working with you. Should you have questions or desire further information, please do not hesitate to contact Nicolas Fetchko, Director for International and Government Affairs, at nfetchko@tiaonline.org or 202-346-3246.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grant E. Seiffert', written in a cursive style.

Grant Seiffert
President