



Los Angeles Area  
Chamber of Commerce

September 1, 2009

Ambassador Ron Kirk  
Office of the United States Trade Representative  
600 17<sup>th</sup> Street N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20208

Re: Free Trade Agreements

Dear Ambassador Kirk:

Thank you for your leadership in promoting free and fair trade for U.S. firms in global markets.

During your visit to Los Angeles to celebrate World Trade Week last May, we exchanged views and comments regarding the importance for our international business community to have the U.S.-Korea and Colombia Free Trade Agreements approved by the U.S. Congress.

These agreements are two immediate opportunities to create jobs and economic growth across the nation. In addition, these FTAs will provide the legal framework for executives to make sound strategic business decisions without having to worry about unilateral decisions by governments changing the rules.

The Chamber knows that no region will benefit more from free trade with these two nations than Southern California. Unfortunately, more than two years after both agreements were signed by negotiators, neither has been ratified by Congress.

Colombia buys approximately \$200 million in goods from the Los Angeles Customs District. We are confident that without trade barriers and gradual elimination of duty rates, this number will be larger in years to come.

Korea buys over \$10 billion from our region, making this country Los Angeles' third largest trading partner, after China and Japan. The FTA with Korea is the most important trade agreement negotiated by the United States since 1994. This agreement is of strategic importance for the United States in commercial, economic and political matters in the Pacific Rim.

An increase trade with Korea and Colombia, through our ports, will indeed help create more exports and more jobs here at home. The Ports of Los Angeles, Long Beach and the Los Angeles World Airports constitute the nation's premier gateway to Asia and Latin America, and are part of the largest Customs District.

We urge to you to convey this important message to members of the U.S. Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carlos J. Valderrama', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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