

# USTR NEWS

## UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

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### **USTR Expresses Appreciation for Extension of ATPA Preferences**

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Trade Representative Susan C. Schwab today made the following statement on the extension of the Andean Trade Preference Act:

“The extension passed by the House today will provide a bridge while we work to secure approval of our free trade agreement (FTA) with Colombia and to implement our FTA with Peru. While the Andean Trade Preference Act (ATPA) has helped generate economic opportunities in the region, we now have a chance to expand economic opportunities for hardworking American companies, farmers and workers as well. Passage of the Colombia FTA will level the playing field for U.S. goods and services in one of Latin America’s fastest growing emerging markets. At the same time, the FTA provides Colombia permanent and stable access to our market. Congress should seize the opportunity to support a key ally and establish a reciprocal trade partnership with Colombia by approving the FTA.”

**Background:**

In 1991, the U.S. Congress authorized duty-free benefits for four Andean nations (Colombia, Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia) under ATPA to help in their fight against illegal drug production and trafficking by expanding their economic opportunities. As part of the Trade Act of 2002, Congress renewed and enhanced the trade preferences for all four countries under the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act (ATPDEA), which expired on December 31, 2006. Congress has twice extended the program, most recently until February 29, 2008.

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