

# USTR NEWS

## UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

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### **USTR Statement on Extension of Andean Trade 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 signed by President George W. Bush:

“I thank Congress for swiftly approving legislation to extend the Andean Trade Preference Act, which will maintain preference benefits while we work with Congress to approve our FTA with Colombia and work with Peru to implement that agreement.

“These are historic agreements that will provide unprecedented access to these strong and growing markets. Both agreements incorporate the labor and environment provisions of the bipartisan agreement reached with congressional leaders last May.

“Like the Peru agreement, the Colombia FTA will provide U.S. businesses, service providers, farmers, and ranchers with a level playing field – turning one-way duty-free access into our market into a two-way trade partnership. It will also help us support a critical ally and friend in the region. Congress should pass the Colombia FTA as quickly as possible.”

**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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