

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 10, 2006

Hon. George W. Bush
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to request that you exclude tobacco from the Peru Free Trade Agreement (FTA), the Andean Free Trade Agreement (AFTA), and all bilateral and regional trade and investment agreements that the United States may be negotiating.

Regardless of our individual views on these agreements, we are accustomed to hearing the argument that lower consumer prices is one of free trade's most important benefits. But tobacco is a unique commodity, killing millions of people around the globe each year. In the case of tobacco, lower prices are not desirable - indeed, they translate into increased smoking rates, more cigarette consumption, and more tobacco-related death and disease. The World Bank and others have documented the correlation between reducing trade barriers to tobacco and increased cigarette consumption.

Additionally, the non-tariff trade rules contained in bilateral and regional trade and investment agreements (such as rules on technical barriers to trade and intellectual property) present special concerns with regard to tobacco. These rules are intended to establish a level playing field between U.S. firms and our trading partners. But in the case of tobacco, these non-tariff rules may be deployed to undermine local public health measures designed to reduce smoking rates, even when the measures apply equally to domestic and foreign companies.

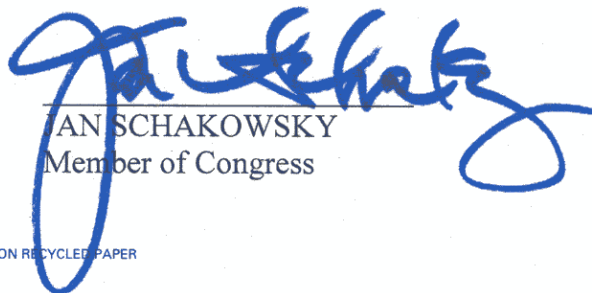
Trade agreements must recognize that tobacco products are uniquely harmful and require special rules similar to those that already apply to trade in other hazardous products, such as hazardous wastes and narcotic drugs. Tobacco products have in the past been excluded from the tariff schedules in the U.S.-Jordan and U.S.-Vietnam free trade agreements. Unfortunately such exemptions were not included in the U.S.-Chile agreement or CAFTA.

At this time, as the Peru FTA and AFTA negotiations are progressing and additional nations seek bilateral agreements with the U.S., it is important that we not repeat the mistakes. We urge that tobacco products be specifically excluded from the final Peru and AFTA agreement - from both the tariff schedule and the non-tariff provisions. We look forward to hearing from you on this pressing public health matter.

Sincerely,



SHERROD BROWN
Member of Congress



JAN SCHAKOWSKY
Member of Congress

Todd R. Platts

TODD PLATTS
Member of Congress

Marty Meehan

MARTY MEEHAN
Member of Congress

Dennis J. Kucinich

DENNIS KUCINICH
Member of Congress

Raul M. Grijalva

RAUL M. GRIJALVA
Member of Congress

Tammy Baldwin

TAMMY BALDWIN
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee

BARBARA LEE
Member of Congress

Luis V. Gutierrez

LUIS V. GUTIERREZ
Member of Congress

Pete Stark

PETE STARK
Member of Congress

Tim Bishop

TIM BISHOP
Member of Congress

Dale E. Kildee

DALE E. KILDEE
Member of Congress

Lois Capps

LOIS CAPPS
Member of Congress

Tom Allen

TOM ALLEN
Member of Congress

Henry Waxman

HENRY WAXMAN
Member of Congress

Frank Pallone

FRANK PALLONE
Member of Congress



ELLEN TAUSCHER
Member of Congress



MICHAEL R. MCNULTY
Member of Congress



STEVE ROTHMAN
Member of Congress

ROBERT WEXLER
Member of Congress



MIKE CAPUANO
Member of Congress

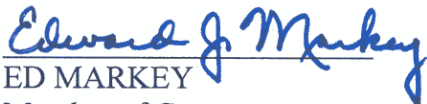
GEORGE MILLER
Member of Congress



GENE GREEN
Member of Congress



ROSA DELAURO
Member of Congress



ED MARKEY
Member of Congress



DIANE WATSON
Member of Congress



STEPHEN F. LYNCH
Member of Congress



JIM OBERSTAR
Member of Congress



EARL BLUMENAUER
Member of Congress



LLOYD DOGGETT
Member of Congress



HILDA SOLIS
Member of Congress



PETER KING
Member of Congress



PETER DEFAZIO
Member of Congress



MAURICE HINCHEY
Member of Congress



SAM FARR
Member of Congress



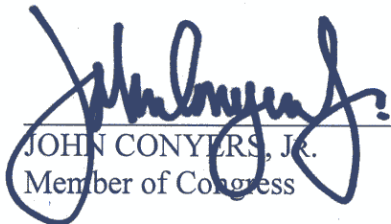
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Member of Congress



BILL PASCRELL
Member of Congress



RUSH HOLT
Member of Congress



JOHN CONYERS, JR.
Member of Congress



JAMES P. MCGOVERN
Member of Congress