

## **Congressman Robin Hayes Questions U.S. Customs**

### **On Enforcement of Illegal Textile Transshipments**

*Hayes Not Satisfied with Customs Response; Cites Difficulty for CAFTA*

March 8, 2005

WASHINGTON, DC - Congressman Robin Hayes (NC-8), today released his correspondence with the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol on the lack of enforcement of textile transshipments. On December 17, 2004, Hayes wrote U.S. Customs about \$9.5 million in funding authorized in the Trade Act of 2002 for the hiring of 72 new U.S. Customs personnel designated to enforce the textile provisions of international trade agreements. Hayes worked to ensure continued funding of these agents in FY2004 and FY2005 to protect our domestic textile industry from surging illegal imports, which have been damaging to the textile industry. Hayes contacted U.S. Customs to follow up on reports that the positions had not been filled as Congress stipulated.

"I'm frustrated by the lack of response from U.S. Customs regarding the hiring of these agents," said Hayes. "I have yet to see any evidence that U.S. Customs is following through and hiring these agents to catch illegal transshipments and protect our workers and businesses. Textile transshipments have caused the loss of thousands of North Carolina jobs. The fact that we can't get a straight answer on this issue will only make it more difficult for CAFTA or any other future agreement to pass Congress."

On December 17, 2004, Hayes originally contacted U.S. Customs about a provision outlined in Section 352 of the Trade Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-210) which authorizes \$9.5 million for the hiring of 72 new U.S. Customs agents. He received a response that did not address the hiring of these additional agents on February 7, 2005. Hayes sent a second letter to U.S. Customs Commissioner Robert Bonner on March 2, 2005 and is currently awaiting response.

In his December 17, 2004 letter, Hayes wrote: "With the expiration of textile and apparel quotas in January 2005 and the continued growth of free trade agreements and preferential trading agreements, it is anticipated that transshipments and textile fraud will continue to increase to take advantage of these reduced or zero duty partnerships. In addition, the ability of the U.S. government to implement safeguard actions against China is directly dependent upon the success of U.S. Customs to enforce such safeguards."

Please note that these three letters are attached to this release. Please

Contact Carolyn Hiett at (202) 220-0710 if you have difficulty accessing the attachments.