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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3308

December 17, 2004

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Ms. Janet Labuda
Director, Textile Enforcement and Operations Division
U.S. Customs and Border Patrol
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20229

Dear Director Labuda:

I am writing to inquire the status of FY2004 and FY2005 funding for additional U.S. Customs agents, which was authorized in Section 352 in the Trade Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-210).

Section 352 authorized \$9.5 million for textile transshipment enforcement. This section specifically provided for the hiring of up to 72 new U.S. Customs personnel designated to enforce the textile provisions of our international trade agreements. I worked very hard to see that this program was fully funded for FY2004 and FY2005 because I know how much of a negative impact this has on our domestic textile industry.

Textile transshipments have caused the loss of thousands of U.S. textile and apparel jobs in recent years. With the expiration of textile and apparel quotas in January 2005 and the continued growth of free trade agreements and preferential trading arrangements, 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 dependant upon the success of U.S. Customs to enforce such safeguards.

Needless to say, these new Customs positions are crucial to the future of the industry. I am anxious to review the progress as a result of the FY2004 and FY2005. I specifically would like to see a detailed report of how many positions have been filled as directed by Section 352. This information is vital in order to review the progress of the new positions and see what steps we need to take to continue the battle against illegal textile imports.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robin Hayes".

Robin Hayes
Member of Congress