

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For procedural questions concerning public comments, contact Gloria Blue, Executive Secretary, TPSC, Office of the USTR, 1724 F Street, NW., Washington, DC 20508, telephone (202) 395-3475. Questions concerning the environmental review, or requests for copies, should be addressed to Alice Mattice or David Brooks, Environment and Natural Resources Section, Office of the USTR, telephone 202-395-7320.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Trade Act of 2002, signed by the President on August 6, 2002, provides that the President shall conduct environmental reviews of [certain] trade agreements consistent with Executive Order 13121—*Environmental Review of Trade Agreements* (64 FR 63,169, Nov. 18, 1999) and its implementing guidelines (65 FR 79,442, Dec. 19, 2000) and report on such reviews to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate. The Order and guidelines are available at <http://www.ustr.gov/environment/environmental.shtml>.

The purpose of environmental reviews is to ensure that policymakers and the public are informed about reasonably foreseeable environmental impacts of trade agreements (both positive and negative), to identify complementarities between trade and environmental objectives, and to help shape appropriate responses if environmental impacts are identified. Reviews are intended to be one tool, among others, for integrating environmental information and analysis into the fluid, dynamic process of trade negotiations. USTR and the Council on Environmental Quality jointly oversee implementation of the Order and Guidelines. USTR, through the Trade Policy Staff Committee (TPSC), is responsible for conducting the individual reviews.

Written Comments

In order to facilitate prompt processing of submissions of comments, the Office of the United States Trade Representative strongly urges and prefers e-mail submissions in response to this notice. Persons submitting comments by e-mail should use the following e-mail address:

FR0097@ustr.gov with the subject line: "CAFTA Interim Environmental Review." Documents should be submitted as either WordPerfect, MSWord, or text (.TXT) files. Persons who make submissions by e-mail should not provide separate cover letters; information that might appear in a cover

letter should be included in the submission itself. To the extent possible, any attachments to the submission should be included in the same file as the submission itself, and not as separate files. If submission by e-mail is impossible, comments should be made by facsimile to (202) 395-6143, attention: Gloria Blue.

Written comments will be placed in a file open to public inspection in the USTR Reading Room at 1724 F Street, NW., Washington DC. An appointment to review the file may be made by calling (202) 395-6186. The Reading Room is open to the public from 10-12 a.m. and from 1-4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Carmen Suro-Bredie,

Chair, Trade Policy Staff Committee.

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OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

Request for Comments and Notice of Public Hearing Concerning Proposed United States-Dominican Republic Free Trade Negotiations

AGENCY: Office of the United States Trade Representative.

ACTION: Notice of intent to initiate free trade negotiations between the United States and the Dominican Republic, request for comments, and notice of public hearing.

SUMMARY: The United States intends to initiate free trade negotiations with the Dominican Republic. The interagency Trade Policy Staff Committee (TPSC) will convene a public hearing and seek public comment to provide the United States Trade Representative (USTR) advice on how specific goods and services and other matters should be treated under an agreement resulting from the proposed negotiations.

DATES: Persons wishing to testify orally at the hearing must provide written notification of their intention, as well as their testimony, by October 1, 2003. A hearing will be held in Washington, DC beginning on October 8, 2003, and will continue as necessary on subsequent days. Written comments are due by noon, November 2, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Submissions by electronic mail: FR0089@ustr.gov (notice of intent to testify and written testimony); FR0090@ustr.gov (written comments). Submissions by facsimile: Gloria Blue, Executive Secretary, Trade Policy Staff Committee, at (202) 395-6143. The public is strongly encouraged to submit

documents electronically rather than by facsimile. (See requirements for submissions below.)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For procedural questions concerning written comments or participation in the public hearing, contact Gloria Blue, Executive Secretary, Trade Policy Staff Committee, at (202) 395-3475. All other questions should be directed to Andrea Gash Durkin, Director for Central America and the Caribbean, (202) 395-6135.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. Background

Under section 2104 of the Trade Act of 2002 (Trade Act) (19 U.S.C. 3804), for agreements that will be approved and implemented through trade promotion authority (TPA) procedures, the President must provide the Congress with at least 90 days written notice of his intent to enter into negotiations and must identify the specific objectives for the negotiations. Before and after the submission of this notice, the President must consult with appropriate Congressional committees and the Congressional Oversight Group regarding the negotiations.

Under section 131 of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2151), the President must seek the advice of the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) regarding the probable economic effects on U.S. industries and consumers of the removal of tariffs and non-tariff barriers on imports pursuant to any proposed agreement. In addition, pursuant to section 133, the President must afford interested persons an opportunity to present their views regarding any matter relevant to any proposed agreement.

On August 4, 2003, after consulting with relevant Congressional committees and the Congressional Oversight Group, the USTR notified the Congress that the President intends to initiate free trade agreement negotiations with the Dominican Republic and identified specific objectives for the negotiations. Through these negotiations, we expect to provide for essentially the same disciplines as those in the Free Trade Agreement we are currently negotiating with the five member countries of the Central American Economic Integration System (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua) (CAFTA), and to negotiate specific market access commitments with the Dominican Republic. On August 6, 2003, the USTR requested the ITC to provide advice on probable economic effects. The ITC intends to provide this advice within four months of its receipt of the request. This notice solicits views