

Submissions by facsimile: Gloria Blue, Executive Secretary, Trade Policy Staff Committee, at (202) 395-6143.

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 should be addressed to David J. Brooks, Office of Environment and Natural Resources, USTR, telephone (202) 395-7320.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. Background Information

On November 18, 2003, in accordance with section 2104(a)(1) of the Trade Act of 2002, the United States Trade Representative, Ambassador Robert B. Zoellick, notified Congress of the President's intent to enter into trade negotiations with the Andean Countries of Colombia, Peru, Ecuador and Bolivia. Ambassador Zoellick outlined specific U.S. objectives for these negotiations in the notification letters to Congress. Copies of the letters are available at http://www.ustr.gov/new/fta/Andean/2003-11-18-notification_letter.pdf.

The TPSC invited the public (69 FR 7532) to provide written comments and/or oral testimony at a public hearing that took place on March 17-18, 2004, to assist USTR in amplifying and clarifying negotiating objectives for the proposed FTA and to provide advice on how specific goods and services and other matters should be treated under the proposed agreement.

As a destination for U.S. exports, the Andeans collectively represented a market of about \$7 billion in 2003. The stock of U.S. foreign direct investment in the Andean countries was \$4.5 billion in 2003. The combination of the size of the market and the current barriers to market access point to significant unrealized potential for U.S. exporters and investors. Market access gains are expected in a broad range of agricultural and industrial sectors, as well as in services. The United States recognizes that economic development in the Andean region provides economic alternatives to the illegal drug trade, promotes socio-economic development and strengthens democratic institutions in the region.

2. Environmental Review

USTR, through the TPSC, will perform an environmental review of the agreement pursuant to the authority delegated by the President in Executive Orders 13277 (67 FR 70305) and 13141 (64 FR 63169) and its implementing guidelines (65 FR 79442).

Environmental reviews are used to identify potentially significant, reasonably foreseeable environmental impacts (both positive and negative), and information from the review can help facilitate consideration of appropriate responses where impacts are identified. Reviews address potential environmental impacts of the proposed agreement and potential implications for environmental laws and regulations. The focus of the review is on impacts in the United States, although global and transboundary impacts may be considered, where appropriate and prudent.

3. Requirements for Submissions

In order to facilitate prompt processing of submissions, USTR strongly urges and prefers electronic (e-mail) submissions in response to this notice.

Persons making submissions by e-mail should use the following subject line: "United States—Andean FTA Environmental Review" followed by "Written Comments." Documents should be submitted as either WordPerfect, MSWord, or text (.TXT) files. Supporting documentation submitted as spreadsheets are acceptable as Quattro Pro or Excel. For any document containing business confidential information submitted electronically, the file name of the business confidential version should begin with the characters "BC-", and the file name of the public version should begin with the characters "P-". The "P-" or "BC-" should be followed by the name of the submitter. 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.

Written comments submitted in response to this request will be placed in a file open to public inspection pursuant to 15 CFR 2003.5, except business confidential information exempt from public inspection in accordance with 15 CFR 2003.6. Business confidential information submitted in accordance with 15 CFR 2003.6 must be clearly marked "BUSINESS CONFIDENTIAL" at the top of each page, including any cover letter or cover page, and must be accompanied by a nonconfidential summary of the confidential information. All public documents and nonconfidential summaries shall be available for public inspection in the USTR Reading Room.

The USTR Reading Room is open to the public, by appointment only, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. An appointment to review the file must be scheduled at least 48 hours in advance and may be made by calling (202) 395-6186.

USTR also welcomes and will take into account the public comments on Andean FTA environmental issues submitted in response to a previous notice—the **Federal Register** notice dated February 17, 2004 (69 FR 7532)—requesting comments from the public to assist USTR in formulating positions and proposals with respect to all aspects of the negotiations, including environmental issues. These comments will also be made available for public inspection.

General information concerning the Office of the United States Trade Representative may be obtained by accessing its Internet Web site (www.ustr.gov).

Carmen Suro-Bredie,

Chair, Trade Policy Staff Committee.

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**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES
TRADE REPRESENTATIVE**

**Trade Policy Staff Committee; Initiation
of Environmental Review of Panama
Free Trade Negotiations; Public
Comments on Scope of Environmental
Review**

AGENCY: Office of the United States Trade Representative.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: This publication gives notice that, pursuant to authority delegated by the President in Executive Order 13277 (67 FR 70305) and consistent with Executive Order 13141 (64 FR 63169) and its implementing guidelines (65 FR 79442), the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR), through the Trade Policy Staff Committee (TPSC), is initiating an environmental review of the proposed United States-Panama Free Trade Agreement. The TPSC is requesting written comments from the public on what should be included in the scope of the environmental review, including the potential environmental effects that might flow from the free trade agreement and the potential implications for U.S. environmental laws and regulations, and identification of complementarities between trade and environmental objectives such as the

promotion of sustainable development. The TPSC also welcomes public views on appropriate methodologies and sources of data for conducting the review. Persons submitting written comments should provide as much detail as possible on the degree to which the subject matter they propose for inclusion in the review may raise significant environmental issues in the context of the negotiation.

DATES: Public comments should be received no later than May 14, 2004.

ADDRESSES: Submissions by electronic mail: FR0421@ustr.gov. Submissions by facsimile: Gloria Blue, Executive Secretary, Trade Policy Staff Committee, at (202) 395-6143.

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 should be addressed to David J. Brooks, Office of Environment and Natural Resources, USTR, telephone (202) 395-7320.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. Background Information

On November 18, 2003, in accordance with section 2104(a)(1) of the Trade Act of 2002, the United States Trade Representative, Ambassador Robert B. Zoellick, notified Congress of the President's intent to enter into trade negotiations with Panama. Ambassador Zoellick outlined specific U.S. objectives for these negotiations in the notification letters to Congress. Copies of the letters are available at http://www.ustr.gov/new/fta/Panama/2003-11-18-notification_letter.pdf.

The TPSC invited the public (69 FR 8518) to provide oral testimony at a public hearing that took place on March 23, 2004, or written comments by April 5, 2004, to assist USTR in amplifying and clarifying negotiating objectives for the proposed FTA and to provide advice on how specific goods and services and other matters should be treated under the proposed agreement.

Two-way trade between the United States and Panama totaled \$2.1 billion in 2003, with U.S. exports accounting for \$1.8 billion of that amount. On average, nearly half of Panama's total imports come from the United States. In addition, the stock of U.S. foreign direct investment in Panama is approximately \$20 billion, concentrated in sectors such as finance, maritime and energy. Plans for expansion of the Panama Canal will create many new government procurement opportunities. Panama

serves as an important financial and commercial crossroads in the Western Hemisphere and has one of the most open economies in the region. Panama is also a reliable partner in the region, working closely with us to advance our common values and objectives in the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

2. Environmental Review

USTR, through the TPSC, will perform an environmental review of the agreement pursuant to the authority delegated by the President in Executive Orders 13277 (67 FR 70305) and 13141 (64 FR 63169) and its implementing guidelines (65 FR 79442).

Environmental reviews are used to identify potentially significant, reasonably foreseeable environmental impacts (both positive and negative), and information from the review can help facilitate consideration of appropriate responses where impacts are identified. Reviews address potential environmental impacts of the proposed agreement and potential implications for environmental laws and regulations. The focus of the review is on impacts in the United States, although global and transboundary impacts may be considered, where appropriate and prudent.

3. Requirements for Submissions

In order to facilitate prompt processing of submissions, USTR strongly urges and prefers electronic (e-mail) submissions in response to this notice.

Persons making submissions by e-mail should use the following subject line: "United States—Panama FTA Environmental Review" followed by "Written Comments." Documents should be submitted as either WordPerfect, MSWord, or text (.TXT) files. Supporting documentation submitted as spreadsheets are acceptable as Quattro Pro or Excel. For any document containing business confidential information submitted electronically, the file name of the business confidential version should begin with the characters "BC-", and the file name of the public version should begin with the characters "P-". The "P-" or "BC-" should be followed by the name of the submitter. 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.

Written comments submitted in response to this request will be placed in a file open to public inspection pursuant to 15 CFR 2003.5, except business confidential information exempt from public inspection in accordance with 15 CFR 2003.6. Business confidential information submitted in accordance with 15 CFR 2003.6 must be clearly marked "BUSINESS CONFIDENTIAL" at the top of each page, including any cover letter or cover page, and must be accompanied by a nonconfidential summary of the confidential information. All public documents and nonconfidential summaries shall be available for public inspection in the USTR Reading Room. The USTR Reading Room is open to the public, by appointment only, from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. An appointment to review the file must be scheduled at least 48 hours in advance and may be made by calling (202) 395-6186.

USTR also welcomes and will take into account the public comments on Panama FTA environmental issues submitted in response to a previous notice—the **Federal Register** notice dated February 24, 2004 (69 FR 8518)—requesting comments from the public to assist USTR in formulating positions and proposals with respect to all aspects of the negotiations, including environmental issues. These comments will also be made available for public inspection.

General information concerning the Office of the United States Trade Representative may be obtained by accessing its Internet Web site (www.ustr.gov).

Carmen Suro-Bredie,

Chair, Trade Policy Staff Committee.

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OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

Trade Policy Staff Committee; Initiation of Environmental Review of Proposed United States-Thailand Free Trade Agreement Negotiations; Public Comments on Scope of Environmental Review

AGENCY: Office of the United States Trade Representative.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: This publication gives notice that, pursuant to authority delegated by