

## *Congressional Action Provides Opportunity for Importers to Lower Duties*

U.S. businesses that wish to lower duties on their imports have been given an opportunity by Congress to do so. The House Ways and Means Committee's Subcommittee on Trade's Chairman Sander Levin (D-MI) and Ranking Member Wally Herger (R-CA) announced yesterday that the Trade Subcommittee is asking that all Members of Congress who wish to introduce tariff reduction or suspension legislation, do so before Friday, December 14, 2007 if the members intend for their bills to be included in omnibus miscellaneous tariff legislation.

### **IMPLICATIONS**

The House Ways and Means Committee generally has jurisdiction over revenue measures and the tariff schedule in particular. The intent of miscellaneous tariff legislation is "to help U.S. manufacturers compete at home and abroad by temporarily suspending or reducing duties on intermediate products or materials that are not made domestically, or where there is no domestic opposition." Accordingly, U.S. companies that import intermediate or other noncontroversial products can work with Members of Congress to introduce legislation by the Trade Subcommittee's deadline that will reduce costs and make U.S. products more competitive in the global marketplace.

### **DEADLINE**

The Subcommittee has established the December 14 deadline in part to evaluate and consider these bills and issue a request for public comment on the bills. In addition, the Trade Subcommittee will request a review and analysis of each bill from the International Trade Commission, the Department of Commerce, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and the United States Trade Representative.

### **CHANGING THE RULES**

Each Congress, the House Ways and Means Committee and Senate Finance Committee typically report their own omnibus miscellaneous tariff legislation which is then conferenced and passed by both chambers. For the first time, Members will be required to provide a written disclosure statement to the Ways and Means Committee Chairman and Ranking Member for any bill that contains a limited tariff benefit, which is defined under the Rules of the House of Representatives as a provision modifying the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States in a manner that benefits ten or fewer entities. The new House Rules changes require that the Ways and Means Committee allow public inspection of the written disclosures iden-

tifying limited tariff provisions reported by the Committee, voted on without Committee consideration but referred to the Committee, or included in a conference report filed by the Committee.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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