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The Honorable Rob Portman  
United States Trade Representative  
600 17th Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Ambassador Portman:

We at Direction 21 wish to commend the work of the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) on the recent Agreement in Principle between the United States and Vietnam for its accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Direction 21 is a business member of the US-VN WTO Coalition and we are strongly in favor of Vietnam achieving Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) and WTO status. For large corporations, as well as for small size companies such as ours, we agree with you that this is a very good agreement for the United States because "it opens a new and growing market for American agricultural goods, services, such as financial services and manufactured products." At the same time, we believe that this is going to be an excellent development for the Vietnamese economy and the Vietnamese people.

With the United States being the final country to conclude bilateral negotiations with Vietnam in this process, we understand that the other major step that needs to be concluded is Congressional approval for PNTR.

Direction 21 is a business consulting firm engaged in US-Asia business, including business and trade with Vietnam, and we are looking forward to attending the APEC Summit in Hanoi in November 2006. As the purpose of APEC is to liberalize and facilitate trade and investment, I respectfully urge you to do all that is possible for the United States to support Vietnam's entry into the WTO by that time. It is a short amount of time from now until then. However, we see from all indications that this is possible and we see that it will be a gigantic step forward in the history of the United States' relationship with Vietnam.

Sincerely,

courtesy copies:

Sarah Chambers / Manager / Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand & Vietnam Affairs / US-ASEAN Business Council / Washington, D.C.  
Virginia B. Foote / President / US-Vietnam Trade Council / Washington D.C.  
Neo Tran / Program Coordinator / US-Vietnam Trade Council / Washington, D.C.