



RETAIL INDUSTRY LEADERS ASSOCIATION

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NEWS RELEASE

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RILA Applauds Introduction of House-Senate Vietnam PNTR Bills

Arlington, VA (June 13, 2006) –The Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA) today congratulated Senators Max Baucus (D-MT), John McCain (R-AZ), John Kerry (D-MA) and Gordon Smith (R-OR); and Congressmen Jim Ramstad (R-MN) and Mike Thompson (D-CA) for introducing legislation to grant Vietnam Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR).

“On behalf of RILA’s member companies, we would like to congratulate Members of the Senate and House for introducing legislation granting Vietnam PNTR. With Vietnam scheduled to enter the World Trade Organization (WTO), PNTR will benefit U.S. consumers and allow RILA members to benefit from access to this growing sourcing market, as well as provide greater opportunities for distribution services and investments,” said RILA President Sandy Kennedy. “It will also strengthen our economic relationship with an important trading partner, and RILA urges Congress to pass this legislation as soon as possible,” continued Kennedy.

Last month, trade negotiators from Vietnam and the United States signed a bilateral agreement that will pave the way for Vietnam’s accession to the WTO. Congress must now vote on whether to grant Vietnam PNTR and allow the United States to take advantage of tariff reductions as well as the distribution and investment commitments undertaken by Vietnam.

Vietnam’s entry into the WTO will provide tremendous benefits U.S. consumers and RILA members. Considering that many member companies have longstanding commitments in Vietnam, the removal of the textile/apparel quotas will provide a more predictable environment for sourcing and improve the ability to meet customer needs by finding the best available combination of speed-to-market, product price and quality. Vietnam’s commitments to liberalize distribution and trading rights will allow RILA members to have greater control over the retail supply chain and open retail outlets in Vietnam, creating additional jobs back in the United States and providing additional opportunities to stock shelves with U.S. products.

“Vietnam PNTR is a key priority for our members and will deliver important benefits for the U.S. economy,” added Kennedy. “RILA looks forward to working with Congress, the Administration and other supporters to pass this legislation as soon as possible.”

The Senate bill’s original cosponsors included Senators Max Baucus (D-MT), John McCain (R-AZ), John Kerry (D-MA), Richard Lugar (R-IN), Chuck Hagel (R-IA), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Tom Carper (D-DE). The House bill’s original cosponsors included Congressmen Jim Ramstad (R-MN), Mike Thompson (D-CA), Paul Ryan (R-WI) and Lane Evans (D-IL).

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The Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA) is the trade association of the largest and fastest growing companies in the retail industry. Its members include more than 400 companies – retailers, product manufacturers, and service suppliers – which together account for more than \$1.5 trillion in annual sales. RILA members operate more than 100,000 stores, manufacturing facilities and distribution centers, have facilities in all 50 states, and provide millions of jobs domestically and worldwide.