



June 27, 2005

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

Fax 202-395-4549

Dear Ambassador Portman,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Consumers for World Trade (CWT) and our members, I want to express our serious concern regarding reports that the Bush Administration is offering various arrangements to cap sugar imports into the United States in an effort to build Congressional support for the Central America Free Trade Agreement-Dominican Republic (CAFTA-DR).

CWT is a national, non-profit, non-partisan organization, established in 1978 to promote consumer interests in international trade and to raise public awareness of the benefits of an open, multilateral trading system. CWT is the only consumer group in America whose sole mission is to educate, advocate and mobilize consumers to support liberal trade policies.

While CWT supports CAFTA-DR, and understands the need to maintain some flexibility to gain approval, we strongly oppose any concessions to further protect the U.S. sugar industry. Such protection inevitably hurts sugar users, refiners, and retail consumers, many of who support CAFTA-DR and, unlike U.S. sugar interests, are working for its passage.

CWT respectfully requests that the Bush Administration not make any commitments that would limit the ability to import sufficient sugar to meet U.S. market demand. There is currently a tight sugar market in the United States with not enough sugar to meet domestic demand. The U.S. will need substantially increased imports in coming months, whether the CAFTA-DR passes or not. In fact, those imports will probably need to be several times larger than the quantities permitted access under CAFTA-DR.

Consumers for World Trade does not believe that the entire U.S. economy should pay to protect the interests of a handful of sugar conglomerates. While we recognize how politically difficult it is to stand up to protectionist interests, especially the domestic sugar industry, we believe that it is nevertheless essential that you do so. Protectionism protects a few at the expense of millions of low-and-middle income Americans.

Yours truly,

Pamela J. Slater
Executive Director
Consumers for World Trade