

Department of the United States
Washington, DC 20513

June 9, 2006

Ambassador Susan Schwab
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Ambassador Schwab,

We are writing to express our support for an enhanced U.S. trade relationship with the Philippines. Specifically, we envision a multi-phased bilateral trade agreement that will ultimately result in a comprehensive free trade agreement (FTA) within a timeframe agreed to by the governments of the United States and the Philippines.

An enhanced trade relationship with the Philippines will provide more opportunities for U.S. exporters and further solidify our relationship with a strategic ally in Southeast Asia. Moreover, as we continue to face challenges in the Doha WTO negotiations, it is necessary for the United States to consider new, innovative trade relationships with our key trading partners.

The United States has a particular interest in the Philippines due to our shared friendship of over 100 years, which has resulted in important economic and trade relations and close personal ties, including a Filipino American community of over 2 million people. Further, since the Philippines' economy depends heavily on trade with the United States, we think that U.S. businesses and workers will gain from enhanced opportunities to increase exports to the Philippines. We also share a deep bond with the Philippines in terms of commitments to democratic values, human rights, the rule of law, and combating terrorism. Simply put, an enhanced trade relationship creates a win-win for both the United States and the Philippines by advancing a productive and strategic alliance.

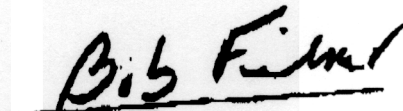
Due in part to the uncertainties of the Doha WTO negotiations and the importance of an active and engaged U.S. presence in Asia, the Administration is already committed to expanding trade relations with the Philippines and other Asian nations under the Enterprise for ASEAN Initiative (EAI). The EAI provides the impetus for the negotiation of bilateral FTAs with the individual countries of ASEAN, and the United States is currently negotiating or has entered into trade agreements with Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia. These countries often compete with the Philippines for U.S. market share, and without an enhanced trade relationship with the United States, the Philippines will lose its competitive edge. U.S. firms will also lose opportunities to increase investment and market share in the Philippines.

The time is now for the United States to broaden its trade relationship with the Philippines. We hope that you will agree that an enhanced trade relationship creates a win-win scenario for both countries. We encourage you to initiate discussions with the government of the Philippines towards such an agreement. We look forward to your response on this matter.

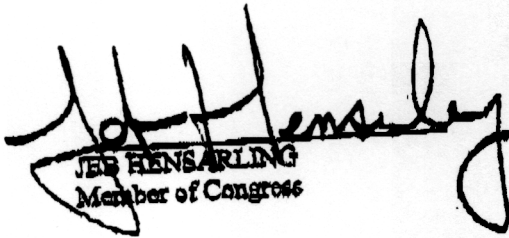
Sincerely,



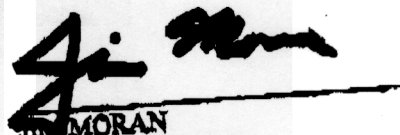
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