

ALCEE L. HASTINGS
23RD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
FLORIDA

RULES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE
AND BUDGET PROCESS
RANKING MEMBER

UNITED STATES
HELSINKI COMMISSION
RANKING DEMOCRATIC MEMBER

FLORIDA DELEGATION
DEMOCRATIC CHAIRMAN

SENIOR DEMOCRATIC WHIP



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0923

PLEASE RESPOND TO:

- 2353 RAYBURN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0923
TELEPHONE: (202) 225-1313
FAX: (202) 225-1171
- 2701 W. OAKLAND PARK BOULEVARD
SUITE 200
FT. LAUDERDALE, FL 33311
TELEPHONE: (954) 733-2800
FAX: (954) 735-9444
- DELRAY BEACH CITY HALL
100 NW 1ST AVENUE
DELRAY BEACH, FL 33444
TELEPHONE: (561) 243-7042
FAX: (561) 243-7327

www.alceehastings.house.gov

February 17, 2012

The Honorable Ron Kirk
United States Trade Representative
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20508

Dear Ambassador Kirk,

I write to urge you to lead a U.S. trade mission to Haiti in order to better facilitate and expand economic ties between our two nations. Under the HOPE II Act (P.L. 110-246), language was included stating that:

It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of Commerce, in coordination with the United States Trade Representative, the Secretary of State, and the Commissioner responsible for U.S. Customs and Border Protection of the Department of Homeland Security, should lead a trade mission to Haiti, within 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, to promote trade between the United States and Haiti, to promote new economic opportunities afforded under the amendments made by section 15402 of this Act, and to help educate United States and Haitian business concerns about such opportunities.

Though the 2010 earthquake understandably prevented such a mission from taking place, the emergency phase of recovery has long been over and the need to encourage trade with Haiti has never been greater. A vibrant economic sector is vital, as Haiti's focus turns to long-term, sustainable rebuilding. The United States government and private sector have poured billions of dollars and countless man-hours into the recovery process. However, a true recovery cannot take hold without job creation and a robust private-sector.

While Haiti may still face its fair share of challenges, many Americans are simply unaware of the economic opportunities available there. In Haiti, Americans will find untapped markets, favorable trade laws, and a large and willing workforce. American businesses are also in a unique position to benefit not only from our geographic proximity to Haiti but also from the large Haitian Diaspora residing in the United States, many of whom remain connected to Haiti and are eager to help.

Given our long history and deep ties with our Haitian neighbors, it is in our nation's best interest to engage in business with Haiti. I therefore strongly recommend you lead a trade mission to Haiti, so that American businesses and their Haitian counterparts can reap the benefits of a flourishing Haitian economy. Thank you for your consideration. With warm regards,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Alcee L. Hastings". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress