



**we wear<sup>SM</sup> jobs**

December 28, 2012

The Honorable David V. Aguilar  
Acting Commissioner  
U.S. Customs & Border Protection  
1300 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20229

Dear Commissioner Aguilar,

On behalf of the American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA), I am writing to express our thanks for your quick action following the recent 8-day work stoppage in the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, and applaud your initiative in publicly releasing clear procedures for trade stakeholders on the East and Gulf Coasts if a labor strike occurs after the December 29 contract expiration date.

AAFA is the national trade association for apparel, footwear, and other sewn product companies, and their suppliers, which compete in the global and domestic market. The apparel and footwear industry overall represents \$350 billion in annual domestic sales and sustains more than four million American jobs.

As you know, our supply chains extend far and wide, and any disruptions unavoidably cause ill effects down the line, directly affecting these jobs held by hardworking Americans. Due to U.S. Customs & Border Protection's rapid response when the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach work stoppage came to an end, the vessel backlog from the strike was able to be cleared quickly and efficiently, and ill effects on the supply chain were capped before they could get worse. With the December 29 contract expiration looming in our East and Gulf Coast ports, U.S. Customs & Border Protection has taken great steps in distributing guidance for diverted or anchored vessels in the case of a strike.

We look forward to working with U.S. Customs & Border Protection through this difficult time and in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kevin M. Burke'.

Kevin M. Burke  
President and CEO  
American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA)

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