



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Office of the Chief Information Officer
Washington, D.C. 20230

March 13, 2012

Mr. Alex Hunt
Chief, Information Policy Branch
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Office of Management and Budget
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Mr. Hunt:

The International Trade Administration (ITA), U.S. Department of Commerce, requests an emergency review of the information collection, entitled "Interim Procedures for Considering Requests under the Textile and Apparel Safeguard Provision of the United States-Korea Free Trade Agreement."

The United States and Korea negotiated the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement (the Agreement), effective March 15, 2012. This Agreement provides for a textile and apparel safeguard mechanism under the textile provisions of the Agreement. This safeguard mechanism applies when, as a result of a reduction or elimination of a customs duty under the Agreement, a Korean textile or apparel article is being imported into the United States in such increased quantities, in absolute terms or relative to the domestic market for that article, and under such conditions as to cause serious damage or actual threat thereof to a U.S. industry producing a like or directly competitive article. In these circumstances, Article 4.1 of the Agreement permits the United States to (a) suspend any further reduction in the rate of duty provided for under Annex 2-B of the Agreement in the duty imposed on the article; or (b) increase duties on the imported article from Korea to a level that does not exceed the lesser of the prevailing U.S. normal trade relations ("NTR")/most-favored-nation ("MFN") duty rate for the article or the U.S. NTR/MFN duty rate in effect on the day before the Agreement enters into force.

The President delegated the responsibility for publishing the procedures and administering the safeguard mechanism requests to the Committee for the Implementation of Textile Agreements (CITA). An interested party in the U.S. domestic textile and apparel industry may file a request for a textile and apparel safeguard action with CITA. CITA will consider an interested party to be an entity (which may be a trade association, firm, certified or recognized union, or group of workers) that is representative of either: (A) a domestic producer or producers of an article that is like or directly competitive with the Korean textile or apparel article; or (B) a domestic producer or producers or a component used in the production of an article that is like or directly competitive with the subject Korean textile or apparel article.

The procedures will facilitate the transmission of requests; ensure wide participation by interested parties; allow for careful review and consideration of information provided to substantiate requests and responses; and provide timely public determination of information used by CITA in making safeguard determinations. The textile and apparel safeguard procedures will

also be of considerable benefit to firms manufacturing textile and apparel goods in the United States in the event that an industry finds itself to be adversely impacted by preferential or duty-free imports of textiles and apparel from Korea.

To date, no interested party has exercised its right to request a safeguard action for a textile or apparel article from Korea. If an interested party submits a request, however, CITA will be bound by the terms of the Agreement to make the necessary determination. In order to honor its international obligations and address the litigation risk it may face by not publishing these procedures as soon as possible, ITA is requesting OMB approval by March 16, 2012.

Your assistance in handling this matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Jessup', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jennifer Jessup
Information Collections Officer