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NFTC President Calls for Market-Oriented U.S. Sugar Policy Reform

November 3, 2009

During a Capitol Hill briefing hosted by the Cato Institute on October 30, National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC) President Bill Reinsch urged policymakers to reform U.S. sugar policy to reduce barriers to trade, maximize U.S. exports, enhance the competitiveness of American farmers, and encourage trading partners to expand agricultural market access. Reinsch discussed the deficiencies he sees in the current system, which relies on government-regulated price floors, marketing quotas, and import restrictions, and prevents the sugar market from operating efficiently.

"The NFTC and our member companies are dedicated to creating the conditions for fair and open overseas markets for U.S. products so our economy can generate jobs through exports," said Reinsch. "U.S. sugar policy, unfortunately, is often at odds with the goal of maximizing U.S. exports."

He continued, "At the most basic level, all trade negotiations are a series of trade-offs among sovereign nations. Current sugar policy means that our negotiators must defend import quotas and high tariffs at the same time they are trying to get other countries to abolish quotas and reduce tariffs. This inconsistency does not enhance U.S. leadership."

Reinsch also said that as result of U.S. import quotas, U.S. trading partners have limited access to their agricultural markets or delayed opening them. "This has happened in several free trade agreements, including the pending one with South Korea. Our decision to leave sugar out of the free trade agreement with Australia created a precedent that helped keep rice out of the Korea free trade agreement," said Reinsch.

In addition to underscoring how quotas, trade-distorting subsidies, and other barriers impact trade relations with the rest of the world, Reinsch highlighted the cost to U.S. consumers. "All objective studies show the sugar program represents a net cost to our economy. An Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) estimate put that cost at \$1.5 billion in consumer costs. This is consistent with a Government Accountability Office (GAO) estimate of \$1.9 billion in consumer costs, and the U.S. International Trade Commission (USITC) has estimated the costs of sugar import barriers at just over \$1 billion," he said.

In conclusion, Reinsch stated, "We believe that Congress will eventually need to look at reforms to the sugar program, especially if there is an agreement in the Doha Round of WTO talks. Almost any conceivable world trade deal will require a significant increase in U.S. sugar import quotas, and the program will need to adapt to that. In the short run, there is a step the government could take now to allow increased trade in sugar: temporarily increase sugar import quotas so that developing countries can supply more product into a market that is forecast to be record-tight this year."

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- ∘ **SNAP-R** (1)
- o Soda Ash (1)
- o Somalia (2)
- o South Africa (14)
- South America (5)
- o South Asia (2)

- South Carolina (11)
- South Carolina State Ports Authority (1)
- South Korea (52)
- Southampton (1)
- o Southern African Customs Union (1)
- <u>Spain</u> (3)
- o <u>Special 301</u> (2)
- o Sri Lanka (6)
- o St. Kitts (1)
- St. Kitts and Nevis (2)
- ∘ St. Louis (1)
- o St. Lucia (2)
- St. Maarten (1)
- St. Vincent & the Grenadines (1)
- State Department (10)
- Steel (4)
- o <u>Strategic Economic Dialogue</u> (3)
- o Sub-Saharan Africa (2)
- o Sub-Saharan Africa (15)
- Subcommittee on Terrorism (1)
- Sudan (10)
- <u>Sugar</u> (2)
- o Surface Trade (30)
- o Suriname (1)
- **SUSTA** (3)
- o Swaziland (1)
- o Sweden (4)
- Switzerland (7)
- Syria (3)
- <u>Tacoma</u> (13)
- o <u>Taiwan</u> (16)
- o Tajikistan (1)
- o TAM Cargo (1)
- ∘ <u>Tampa</u> (4)
- o Tampa Cargo (2)
- Tampa Port Authority (4)
- o Tangiers (1)
- o Tanzania (11)
- \circ Tariffs (2)
- TASC (1)
- Taxes (6)
- Technology (12)
- Telecommunications (6)
- o Tennessee (6)
- o Texas (10)
- o <u>Textiles</u> (7)
- o Thailand (8)
- ∘ <u>Tibet</u> (1)
- o TNT (1)
- o TNT Express (1)
- o Tobacco (4)
- ∘ <u>Togo</u> (4)
- o Toledo (2)
- o Toronto (1)
- ∘ <u>TPCC</u> (1)
- Trade Agreements (18)
- Trade and Investment Cooperation Forum Agreement (1)
- Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (10)

- Trade Deficit (27)
- Trade Enforcement Act (1)
- Trade finance (5)
- Trade Missions (17)
- o Trade Policy (4)
- Trade Preference Programs (1)
- Trade security (1)
- Trade shows (2)
- o Trademarks (1)
- o <u>Trans Atlantic Liner Services</u> (1)
- TransAtlantic Business Dialogue (1)
- Transatlantic Economic Council (2)
- Transpacific Stabilization Agreement (2)
- Transparency Agreement (1)
- Transportation (45)
- Trinidad & Tobago (5)
- Tropical Shipping (1)
- o Trucking (1)
- o TSA (10)
- TSRA (1)
- ∘ <u>TTB</u> (1)
- <u>Turkey</u> (9)
- o <u>Turkmenistan</u> (1)
- Turks and Caicos (1)
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce (20)
- U.S. Commercial Service (4)
- o U.S. Grains Council (1)
- U.S. Meat Export Federation (5)
- U.S. Munitions List (12)
- U.S.-Afghanistan Trade and Investment Agreement (1)
- U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement (3)
- U.S.-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement (1)
- U.S.-Chile Free Trade Agreement (6)
- U.S.-China Business Council (1)
- U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission (9)
- U.S.-China SED (3)
- U.S.-China Strategic Economic Dialogue (2)
- U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement (4)
- U.S.-Morocco Free Trade Agreement (1)
- U.S.-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement (3)
- U.S.-Singapore Free Trade Agreement (2)
- o Uganda (9)
- Ukraine (13)
- Uncategorized (18)
- UNCITRAL (1)
- United Arab Emirates (14)
- United Arab Shipping Company S.A.G. (2)
- United Kingdom (10)
- United Nations (14)
- United States (55)
- United States Patent and Trademark Office (3)
- Universities Space Research Association (1)
- UPS (13)
- o Uruguay (8)
- US-VISIT (6)
- o USAID (14)
- o USDA (148)
- **USDEC** (1)

- o <u>USF Holland</u> (1)
- ∘ <u>USIBA</u> (1)
- USIBC (4)
- ∘ <u>USMEF</u> (22)
- ∘ <u>USPS</u> (1)
- USPTO (4)
- ∘ <u>USSEC</u> (1)
- o <u>USTDA</u> (36)
- ∘ <u>USTR</u> (121)
- <u>Utah</u> (1)
- o Uzbekistan (2)
- o V Australia (1)
- o <u>Vancouver</u> (2)
- Vancouver (WA) (3)
- Venezuela (4)
- o VeriTainer Corp. (1)
- o Vermont (1)
- o <u>Vietnam</u> (21)
- o Virginia (5)
- Virginia Port Authority (8)
- o Visa Waiver Program (19)
- <u>Vladivostok</u> (1)
- o Wallenius Wilhelmsen Logistics (6)
- Warehousing (3)
- o Washington (State) (6)
- ∘ <u>WCO</u> (2)
- o weapons (4)
- West Africa (1)
- West Bank & Gaza Strip (2)
- Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (8)
- Westway Group (1)
- o Wildlife trade (3)
- Wilmington (N.C.) (2)
- ∘ WIPO (10)
- o Wisconsin (2)
- Wood packaging material (2)
- World Airways (1)
- o World Bank (33)
- World Chambers Federation (1)
- World Customs Organization (4)
- World Economic Forum (4)
- World Intellectual Property Organization (3)
- Worldwide Flight Services (1)
- ∘ <u>WTCGP</u> (1)
- o WTO (96)
- o Yang Ming (8)
- Yusen Air Sea Service Ltd. (1)
- o Zambia (1)
- o ZIM (8)
- o Zimbabwe (1)