
Trade Update

By Carlos M. Gutierrez, Jr. / Nov 24, 2014

The current United States trade agenda remains focused on negotiations for the TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership) and TTIP (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership). If passed, both agreements will have important repercussions for U.S. commercial relationships.

As the lame duck period comes to a close and a new Congress is seated, we can expect the following developments in the trade arena:

- TPP: When signed into law, TPP will create an Asia-Pacific wide trading bloc which also includes the United States, Mexico, Canada, and Peru. After five years of negotiations, negotiators had hoped to come to an agreement by year's end. A statement released by the leaders of TPP nations during the recent Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in China, alluded to the forthcoming end of negotiations. Nevertheless, domestic concerns by Labor and environmental activists could hamper Congressional support for the deal. Given continuing negotiations, Congressional consideration of TPP will be pushed forward at least until the next Congress.
- TTIP: The Europe-US Free Trade agreement, better known as TTIP, is expected by many to be finalized in 2015. Yet, with concerns over financial services liberalization, data protection laws, and other various regulatory hurdles, it is possible negotiations could last well into election year 2016.
- TPA: In Congress, the effort to grant President Obama Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) remains under consideration. President Obama has been without Trade Promotion Authority for his entire time in office. During this time, Republicans have been strong proponents for strengthening the President's authority to negotiate Free Trade Agreements. Lawmakers have expressed an interest in moving forward with TPA legislation during the lame duck period.

As negotiations continue, to maximize the potential benefits of both the TPP and TTIP, interested parties should undertake a concerted effort to advocate on behalf of their preferred outcomes to Members of their respective Congressional delegations.

Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns as you begin to formulate your trade strategy and accompanying advocacy plan.