



The Governor's Office
Turks and Caicos Islands

8th November 2012

Office of the US Trade Representative
Washington, DC
USA

Dear US Trade Representative

Re: Request for Comments Regarding the Granting of Certain Trade benefits to the Turks & Caicos Islands.

Docket Number USTR-2012-0028

In my present capacity as Head of the Government of the Turks & Caicos Islands (TCI) I welcome the initiative by the US Trade representative to invite the TCI to become eligible to receive benefits under the provisions of the Caribbean Basin Economy Recovery Act. I am pleased to take this opportunity to provide the Trade Policy Staff Committee with a compilation of comments received from local TCI organizations, expressing support for the initiative.

Following the consultation announcement in the Federal Register on 11th October my office and I discussed the opportunity with a cross section of business groups on the islands, the three political parties, the Trade and Investment Directors at the TCI civil service and also issued a public announcement for citizens to submit their personal views to the Governor.

The business groups specifically approached were the Chambers of Commerce on Grand Turk and Providenciales, the TCI Business Round Table, the TCI Bankers Association and the Hotel and Tourism Association. Together these represent most of the established business community across TCI who are involved in cross border trade or interested in developing new collaborative ventures. The overwhelming response from business was very positive about joining this trade mechanism and saw it as an excellent opportunity to assist TCI to diversify its economy beyond the important tourism sector. This view was echoed by the Trade Directorate who remarked the invitation to join the CBI was very timely. TCI has recently prepared a new national economic development strategy, which identified an intention to broaden the economy beyond tourism, insurance-related financial services and marine mollusc and shellfish exports.

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In particular, diversification opportunities were suggested in the sectors of light engineering and fabrication, general small-scale or branded goods manufacture and quality agriculture, aquaculture and prepared food products. All of these sectors offer the future potential to produce some goods for trade, as well as TCI being viewed as an ideal partner and near-neighbour for collaborative ventures with North America.

In my discussions with the political parties I know they share a vision of the TCI establishing a larger trading presence within the northern Caribbean area and building even stronger trading relations with its key partner, the USA. I am informed they view the opportunity for TCI to become a beneficiary of the CBERA as an important step forward to improve the investment attractiveness of the islands for both TCI and US business interests.

We had a limited response from a local public consultation announcement, which was supplemented by articles in the three TCI newspapers and on the two local TV stations. Whilst it is probably fair to note many members of the general public do not have an understanding of the importance of international trade relations, the theme of the comments received were supportive of the TCI application. Some went further and wanted to know more about the scope and opportunities offered by the CBI. In these instances we referred them to the USTR web site. No negative comments were received during our local consultation.

I trust you find this round up helpful in your deliberations following the completion of your consultation exercise on 9th November. We have also received letters of support from two trade bodies, which will be forwarded separately as electronic submissions to your web site. Once again, thank you for the opportunity for the TCI to become an active participant of the Caribbean Basin Initiative. I assure you the Government of TCI is ready to assume its obligation to be an active and constructive member of the Initiative in the future.

I look forward to a positive outcome.

Yours faithfully



D R Todd
H.E. Governor