



NEWS IN BRIEF

USTR Asks for Comments Regarding NAFTA Renegotiation

The Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) has issued a Federal Register Notice (FRN) of the intent to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). To assist the USTR in its negotiations the office has invited any interested persons to send in comments on any issues that they think need to be changed, removed or added to help modernize NAFTA. The comment period will end on June 12, 2017; therefore, any interested commenters will need to act quickly. The FRN also gives notices that a hearing will be held and it gives instructions on how to apply to testify at that hearing. Applications to testify must be also in by June 12, 2017.

The FRN can be found at: <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2017-05-23/pdf/2017-10603.pdf>.

Bill Introduced to Add Footwear to GSP

Last week Congress introduced a bill that would allow certain type of footwear to be added to the articles eligible for duty-free treatment under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP). Introduced by Congressman Adrian Smith (R-NE), the bill focuses on types of footwear not commonly made in the United States, to not impact footwear made here.

If the legislation passes Congress and is approved by the Trump administration, it will be the first time any footwear would be part of the 43-year-old GSP program. The bill, H.R. 2735, has been assigned to the House Ways and Means Committee. The text of the bill was not posted on the Congress.gov website as of Monday, but the text should be available soon at: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/2735?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22HR+2735%22%5D%7D&r=1>.

FDA Looking for a Culture of Compliance for FSVP

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has said that it will look for a "Culture of Compliance" as the Foreign Shipper Verification Program takes effect on May 30. Sharon Mayl, senior policy advisor at the FDA Office of Foods and Veterinary Medicine, states that the FDA will conduct interactive inspections with importers with opportunities for explanations by importers and FDA regulators. Importers will be able to explain how their programs meet FDA requirements or how they will take corrective actions if FDA finds discrepancies.

The FDA will not enforce FSVP compliance on a shipment by shipment basis, as long as the required data elements are transmitted, but will rather take a general approach looking at a review of records in its pilot enforcement. Mayl explains the FDA's approach and requirements as they begin this program as well.

The FDA has posted this interview with its interesting details on its website at: https://www.fda.gov/Food/GuidanceRegulation/FSMA/ucm560689.htm?source=govdelivery&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery.

Additional information can be found here: <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2017-05-23/pdf/2017-10603.pdf>.

President Trump and the King of Saudi Arabia Sign a Declaration

During their recent meeting President Trump and King of Salman of Saudi Arabia discussed trade along with plans on how to bring stability to the Saudi Arabia. In a press conference with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Saudi Foreign Minister Ade al Jubeir there was a discussion on the Strategic Vision Declaration that was signed. The foreign Minister said "...in addition to the signing of this Strategic Vision Declaration, the two countries signed a series of agreements, both commercial as well as government to government; that involve trade, investment; that involve infrastructure, that involve technology, that involve defense sales; that involve Saudi investments in American infrastructure as well as American investments in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, whether in the form of building up our defense manufacturing capability or other areas. The total value of those investments is in excess of \$380 billion."

The full remarks can be found on the U.S. Department of State website at: <https://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2017/05/271005.htm>.

By Todd Boice, President