



Business Roundtable

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TO MEMBERS OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

On behalf of Business Roundtable, I am writing to urge you to support the U.S.-Oman Free Trade Agreement (FTA) during this week's vote.

This important agreement represents an opportunity for the United States to expand its political and economic relationships in the Middle East and to strengthen our ties with Oman, an important ally in the region. America has a strong strategic and economic interest in the U.S.-Oman FTA; along with the U.S.-Morocco and U.S.-Bahrain FTAs, the Oman FTA will encourage economic and social reforms in the Middle East. Building our ties with moderate Middle East countries, like Oman, will help the U.S. to reduce poverty and increase stability in the region. Congressional approval of the U.S.-Oman FTA is an important step in our strategic involvement in the Middle East.

In addition, the FTA has met all of the negotiating objectives set out by Congress in the Trade Act of 2002, and will bring important benefits to American business, farmers and workers.

The U.S.-Oman FTA promises to significantly open Oman's market to U.S. agriculture, manufacturing and services industries. Under the terms of the agreement, all bilateral trade in consumer and industrial goods will immediately become duty-free upon implementation of the agreement. In addition, Oman will provide immediate duty-free access for U.S. agricultural exports in 87 percent of tariff lines, with the remainder phased-out over 10 years. The agreement also opens new markets for the U.S. services sector, with banking, insurance and securities services all seeing significant liberalization.

In addition to opening markets for U.S. goods, services and agricultural exports, this FTA provides important protections for intellectual property rights. The investment provisions of the agreement ensure important protections for U.S. businesses investing in Oman. The agreement also includes strong safeguards to protect the environment and worker rights.

The U.S. business community strongly supports the U.S.-Oman FTA. Prompt implementation of this important agreement will demonstrate U.S. commitment to our relationship with Oman, while at the same time open new markets for U.S. exports and the American jobs that depend on them. We urge quick Congressional approval of the U.S.-Oman FTA.

On behalf of Business Roundtable and its 160 member companies, I urge you to vote for the U.S.-Oman FTA.

Sincerely,

John J. Castellani

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