

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20508

MAY 13 2005

The Honorable Haley Barbour
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 139
Jackson, MS 39205

Dear Governor ~~Barbour~~ *Haley*:

Thank you for your letter to Ambassador Zoellick regarding Mississippi's willingness to cover its state procurement in the free trade agreements we are negotiating with Panama and the Andean countries of Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. Such commitments improve our ability to persuade these countries to open their sub-central procurement markets to U.S. suppliers, thus creating new opportunities for Mississippi companies and workers.

As you know, I was officially sworn in on April 29, 2005. I am grateful and honored that President Bush has asked me to join his Cabinet as the United States Trade Representative. As I begin my service, I plan to pursue an aggressive agenda with a focus on opening new markets, enforcing our trade agreements and trade laws, spreading economic freedom, and working in close partnership with Congress. I look forward to working with you in this position.

We will keep you apprised of developments as the negotiations proceed. If you have any questions, please contact Jean Heilman Grier, Senior Procurement Negotiator, at (202) 395-9476 or email jean_grier@ustr.eop.gov.

I look forward to working with you and learning about issues that are important to you. Please keep in touch.

Sincerely,

Rob Portman
Rob Portman