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FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE

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April 10, 2008

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Rep. Ellen
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Washington, DC

-Today, the House of Representatives passed a rule to suspend the requirement that the Colombia Free Trade Agreement be considered within 60 legislative days in the House - giving Congress the prerogative in scheduling a vote.

On

Tuesday, President Bush took the unprecedented step of sending up the Colombia Trade deal without following established protocols of Congressional consultation. The rule is intended to create time for bipartisan negotiations on measures to strengthen the American economy and help American workers.

Rep. Ellen Tauscher released the following statement.

"Fast track was put in place to allow the negotiation of trade agreements that improve the overall strength of our economy while helping the American worker. In supporting TPA in 2002, I did not intend it to be used in this political, counter-productive manner that jeopardizes the prospects for eventual approval of the Colombia FTA.

"Substance and quality of the agreement aside, the President has once again over-stretched his authority by demanding a vote without adequately consulting the Congress.

"Given the fragile state of our economy, we need to be pushing a trade agenda built on compromise and cooperation, not confrontation.

"I'm a proponent of continued bipartisan support for domestic economic measures, including additional funding to stimulate the economy, provide support and training for workers, and to address housing, energy, and health care. I urge both President Bush and my colleagues to recommit themselves to these goals, in order to create favorable conditions for consideration of the Colombia FTA."

Rep.
Ellen O. Tauscher