

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary
(Houston, Texas)

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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

I am pleased that the House of Representatives today approved the free trade agreement with Peru with a strong bipartisan vote.

Expanding markets for our goods and services is crucial to continued economic growth and job creation here in America. Through free trade agreements, we establish rules that ensure the opportunities and benefits of trade are available to our workers, ranchers, farmers, and service providers.

For more than 14 years, Peru has benefited from broad access to our markets under the Andean Trade Preference Act. This U.S.-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement will help level the playing field for American exporters and investors. Approval of this Agreement will also send a strong signal that we are willing to support those who share our values of economic freedom and democracy.

By strengthening our trading relationships with important neighbors - including through our trade agreements with Colombia and Panama - we will significantly advance both our economic and national security interests. These democracies are trying to improve the lives of their citizens. We should embrace the strong commitment to economic freedom of countries in our region, and the efforts of Colombia to fight terrorists and drug traffickers and to strengthen the rule of law.

Today's vote in the House is the first on a free trade agreement since my Administration and the leaders of both parties in Congress agreed on a new bipartisan way forward.

I encourage the U.S. Senate to quickly approve this Agreement, and for Congress then to move promptly to

consideration of our free trade agreements with Colombia,
Panama, and South Korea.

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