



June 8, 2005

An Open Letter to the House of Representatives: Support the Chabot Amendment on Eliminating the Market Access Program

On behalf of the 350,000 members of the National Taxpayers Union (NTU), I urge you to vote for the Chabot Amendment to the FY 2006 Agriculture Appropriations Bill (H.R. 2744) that would end taxpayer funding of the wholly unnecessary activities of the Market Access Program (MAP). As you know, the MAP uses funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation to aid in the creation, expansion, and maintenance of foreign markets for U.S. agricultural products. U.S. taxpayers will be spending \$125 million this year and up to \$200 million annually in the future on commercial activities such as consumer promotions, market research, trade shows, and trade servicing.

NTU and its members strongly favor free trade and the private efforts of American businesses to engage in both export and import operations. However, it is absurd to force overburdened taxpayers to subsidize commodity producers as diverse as the Dry Pea and Lentil Council and the American Seafood Institute in their efforts to market their products overseas. In fact, taxpayer-subsidized trade is not really free trade at all. The more U.S. taxpayers are forced to support unnecessary and economically dubious programs such as the MAP, the less credibility our nation has on adhering to free trade principles.

One would think that with federal deficits looming far into the future and government spending out of control, Congress would take swift action to abolish some of the most wasteful and unnecessary federal programs. Although the MAP is indeed relatively small when compared with other massive bureaucracies found in Washington, the elimination of smaller programs will hopefully present Congress with an opportunity to begin trimming corporate welfare and pork-barrel spending from the federal budget.

Because the MAP is such an egregious example of Congress's out-of-control appetite for special interest spending, NTU will significantly weight votes in support of the Chabot amendment in our annual Rating of Congress.

Sincerely,

Paul J. Gessing
Director of Government Affairs