

07-000795

LINDSEY O. GRAHAM
SOUTH CAROLINA



280 RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
(202) 224-5972

UNITED STATES SENATE

March 1, 2007

The Honorable Carlos M. Gutierrez
Secretary
United States Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230-0002

Secretary Gutierrez:

I write today to bring the National Textile Center (NTC) to your attention. As you may know, the NTC is a collaborative consortium of eight American universities researching textile and fiber products for the United States Department of Commerce (DOC). Its mission is to enhance and expand the knowledge base of the American textile industry through support of research projects and educational programs across the country.

Some of the educational initiatives sponsored by the NTC include competitive graduate fellowships, undergraduate research internships, and K-12 programs in textile-specific technological areas. The NTC has also hosted high school recruitment forums intended to raise interest in science and product design. In addition, NTC-funded research at the University of California - Davis has generated new materials that protect firefighters, military personnel, and medical workers from fire and biological and chemical agents.

The NTC has become a critical component of the American textile industry's effort to remain globally competitive, and the DOC has provided a large majority of the NTC operating budget. Most of that funding has come specifically from International Trade Administration (ITA) grants supported by congressionally-directed appropriations.

With the passage of HJ Res 20, the *Revised Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2007*, however, Congress has agreed to fund the government in fiscal year 2007 at levels passed in fiscal year 2006 appropriations legislation. As a result, funding for a large majority of the projects and programs identified in the fiscal year 2006 appropriations bills is not guaranteed by law. The NTC is one such project, and I am concerned that the program's future could be jeopardized if left unfunded by DOC in fiscal year 2007.

Because the NTC has become so crucial to America's textile industry, I hope you will consider including resources for the NTC in your fiscal year 2007 spending plan. I appreciate your attention to this request and look forward to working on issues concerning the NTC now and in the future. Should you require any additional information or have any questions, please contact Andrew King of my staff at (202) 224-5972.

Sincerely,

Lindsey O. Graham
United States Senator

LOG/tsb

MAR - 9 RECD

508 HAMPTON STREET
SUITE 202
COLUMBIA, SC 29201
(803) 933-0112

401 WEST EVANS STREET
SUITE 226B
FLORENCE, SC 29501
(843) 668-1505

101 EAST WASHINGTON STREET
SUITE 220
GREENVILLE, SC 29601
(864) 250-1417

530 JOHNNIE DODDS BOULEVARD
SUITE 202
MOUNT PLEASANT, SC 29554
(843) 649-0997

140 EAST MAIN STREET
SUITE 110
ROCK HILL, SC 29730
(803) 366-2529

136 EAGLES NEST DRIVE
SUITE B
SENICA, SC 29078
(804) 888-5300



THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
Washington, D.C. 20230

March 26, 2007

The Honorable Lindsey O. Graham
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Graham:

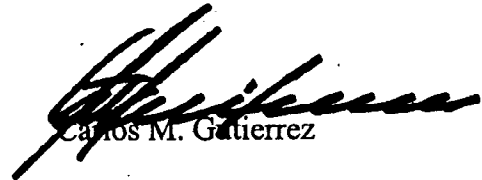
Thank you for your letter regarding continued funding for the National Textile Center (NTC). I appreciate your concerns, and I am pleased to address this important matter.

The Department of Commerce (DOC) has been encouraged by the current activities and programs of the NTC, and believes that continued research efforts will help maintain a viable and competitive U.S. textile and apparel industry. Over the past 15 years, the DOC has continuously supported NTC programs. However, as you indicated in your letter, the Revised Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2007 (Pub. L. No. 110-05), signed by the President on February 15, 2007, prohibits DOC from giving legal effect to earmarks this year. Although the continuing resolution did not authorize direct funding for the NTC, we are working with the group to identify potential alternative methods of funding.

The Bush Administration continues to place a high priority on ensuring a level playing field and creating a healthy, competitive economic environment for the U.S. textile and apparel industry. We are committed to opening foreign markets to U.S. textile and apparel products, making reciprocal market access a priority in trade agreements, and assuring that our trading partners play by the rules. DOC also conducts a special program to promote exports of American textile and apparel products, which is planned and implemented in close collaboration with the domestic industry.

If you have any further questions, please contact me or Nat Wienecke, Assistant Secretary for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, at (202) 482-3663.

Sincerely,


Carlos M. Gutierrez

Hope you are well. Thank you for your leadership.