

Subject to Legal Review for Accuracy, Clarity, and Consistency
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Draft 8 May 2006

The Honorable Robert J. Portman
Office of United States Trade Representative
Washington D.C.

Dear Ambassador Portman:

As you know, Colombian coffee enjoys a strong reputation in the United States for quality. Unfortunately, this reputation can provide an incentive to sell non-Colombian coffee as Colombian coffee, in order to benefit from the higher prices commanded by the genuine product.

I am writing because of concerns that our coffee industry has expressed to us concerning the possible mislabeling of coffee in the U.S. market as “Colombian”. I understand from discussions during the negotiations of the Trade Promotion Agreement between our two countries that there are various mechanisms available in the United States to prevent such activity. I would greatly appreciate an opportunity for Colombian officials to meet with relevant U.S. government officials, along with representatives of our coffee industry, to identify these mechanisms and discuss how they can best be used to protect the reputation of Colombian coffee. The appropriate follow up of this issue is important.

Please let me know if it would be possible to schedule such a meeting.

Sincerely,

Jorge Humberto Botero

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The Honorable Jorge Humberto Botero
Ministro de Comercio, Industria y Turismo
Ministerio de Comercio , Industria y Turismo
Bogotá, Colombia

Dear Minister Botero:

Thank you for your letter concerning Colombian coffee and your desire to meet with relevant U.S. government officials concerning the mechanisms available to prevent the marketing of non-Colombian coffee as “Colombian”. I understand your concern about wanting to protect the reputation of Colombian coffee, and believe a meeting with relevant agencies to discuss your specific concerns and available U.S. legal mechanisms would be appropriate.

Given the importance of this issue to you, my staff will be contacting your office shortly to arrange for a mutually convenient time and place for such a meeting.

Thank you again for your letter. Please let me know if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Robert J. Portman