November 20, 2009

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman
Senate Committee on Finance
215 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Finance
215 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: S. 2526 (Cantwell), A bill to extend and modify the temporary suspension of duty on certain women's footwear, valued over $23/pair, covering the ankle, whose height from the bottom of the outer sole to the top of the upper does not exceed 8 inches, with a coated or laminated textile fabric.

Dear Chairman Baucus and Ranking Member Grassley:

Outdoor Industry Association is the national trade association for the suppliers, manufacturers and retailer of active outdoor recreation products, including apparel, footwear and accessories. The outdoor industry contributes $730 billion annually to the U.S. economy, supports nearly 6.5 million jobs across the United States and generates $49 billion in national tax revenue every year.

On behalf of the more than 1200 OIA member businesses and the thousands of Americans they employ, I write to you in support of S. 2526, a bill to extend and modify a previously enacted miscellaneous tariff bill (MTB) related to certain outdoor performance footwear.

S. 2526 is an extension of legislation enacted through the 2006 MTB process. Like the original MTB, this extension bill is non-controversial and was developed in consultation with the remaining manufacturers of footwear products in the United States and their trade association(s). The duty suspension enacted in 2006 has been tremendously beneficial for the manufacturers of eligible performance outdoor footwear, their retailers and vendors and ultimately, the American consumer. In fact, it was in large part due to the passage of the original duty suspension on these products that companies such as Oboz Footwear in Bozeman, MT and many others were able to expand, adding new jobs and diversifying their product offerings to support further growth.

In addition, American companies that supply the inputs, coatings and other technical features of outdoor performance footwear have realized benefits from the current duty suspension associated with this bill and its extension would continue to support the jobs they sustain and aids their continued growth.

Further, as the U.S. economy continues to recover, OIA believes enactment of this tariff bill and several other MTBs introduced on behalf of OIA members are crucial to bolstering that recovery and creating new jobs in the outdoor industry and beyond. I ask that you add S. 2526 to the MTB package and ensure enactment this year by passing the package as soon as possible.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this important legislation and I appreciate your consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,

Frank Hugelmeyer
President and Chief Executive Officer

4909 Pearl East Circle, Suite 200 | Boulder, Colorado 80301| 303.444.3353 | www.outdoorindustry.org