



September 29, 2023

His Excellency Luis Abinader
President of the Dominican Republic

Dear Mr. President:

As organizations that have long advocated for a strong U.S./Dominican Republic trade partnership, the undersigned are writing to urge you to urgently reopen the Dominican Republic/Haitian border and seek alternative, diplomatic solutions to resolve this crisis.

The sudden border closure is exacting a heavy human and economic cost in both countries, and that damage is, in turn, gravely undermining the trade and economic partnership each country has with the United States. For example, the Dominican – Haitian border partnership supports an important market for the U.S. textile industry, with the Dominican Republic (primarily because of these border operations) currently positioned as the second largest market for U.S. yarn exports.

Our three-way partnerships are built on trust and predictability, but that is now at risk because of the sudden border closure. Beginning with the Caribbean Basin Initiative and expanded under the U.S./Central American Free Trade Agreement and the Haitian HELP and HOPE measures, important co-production models uniting the Dominican Republic and Haiti have flourished, directly and indirectly employing tens of thousands of individuals and supporting many communities on both sides of the border.

Closing land, water, and air links between the two countries not only severs the island, but it threatens to irreparably harm the progress we have all achieved over the many decades of this partnership. That it comes at a time when Haiti is enduring an acute humanitarian crisis only exacerbates the adverse impact.

We are confident your leadership can resolve the underlying diplomatic crisis and are pleased to see that the OAS is urging the Haitian and Dominican Republic governments to meet urgently to achieve this goal. We second that request, noting that each day this border closure persists greatly offsets the value of any solution with irreversible economic damage.

Thank you for your immediate consideration of this urgent request.

Sincerely,

American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA)
American Association of Exporters and Importers (AAEI)
National Cotton Council (NCC)
National Council of Textile Organizations (NCTO)
National Foreign Trade Council (NFTC)
National Retail Federation (NRF)
Outdoor Industry Association (OIA)
Sewn Products Equipment & Suppliers Association (SPESA)
United States Council for International Business (USCIB)