



ABA News

Press Release from the American Bakers Association



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Big Sugar's Sticky Mess: The U.S. Sugar Lobby Caught with their Hand in the Cookie Jar

Last week USDA Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer and U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab issued a press release critical of Big Sugar's recent attempts to unilaterally re-negotiate the entire North American Free Trade Agreement. "The Administration cannot support recent sugar policy recommendations and will oppose efforts to implement them through legislation. An integrated sweetener market will be beneficial for the people of our two countries, and producers and consumers can work within the existing policy framework-as other commodity groups have done-to address any legitimate threat of disruption".

Big Sugar has argued that managed trade was needed as a protection against market chaos or disruption. "The sugar lobby was not so much interested in protecting the market from manipulative influences but rather they were interested in preventing the market from competition. ABA and its members strongly agree with the Administration's statement and urge Congress to take further steps to undo protectionist schemes instituted by Big Sugar," said Robb MacKie, ABA President & CEO. "On behalf of the ABA and its membership, I would like to thank Secretary Schafer and Trade Representative Schwab for taking a strong stand against these damaging sugar lobby recommendations," continued Mr. MacKie.

ABA has long advocated for the sugar program to more closely resemble other commodity subsidy programs, such as those for such as those for cotton, rice, and grains. Both farm bills already increase the loan rates for sugar and institute an 85% domestic use guarantee for U.S. sugar producers, as well as create a sugar for ethanol program estimated to cost taxpayers between \$4 and \$5 billion over the next 10 years. "The proposals currently included in the farm bill are bad enough, so I am pleased to see that the Administration stepped up and said enough is enough", said Cory Martin, ABA Federal Government Relations Manager. "While this is an important first step in undoing years of damaging protectionist language within the sugar program, there is still a long way to go."

About the American Bakers Association:

ABA is the Washington D.C.-based trade association that has been the voice of the wholesale baking industry since 1897. ABA has a long and dedicated history of representing the interests of the wholesale baking industry before the U.S. Congress, federal agencies, state legislatures and international regulatory authorities. ABA represents approximately 80 percent of the wholesale bakeries in the U.S. and their suppliers.