

June 10, 1998

UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20436

MEMORANDUM TO THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON PROPOSED TARIFF LEGISLATION¹

Bill no., sponsor, and sponsor's state: H.R. 3509 (105th Congress), Representative Spence (SC).²

Companion bill: None.³

Title as introduced: To suspend until December 31, 2001, the duty on parts for use in the manufacture of loudspeakers.

Summary of bill:⁴

The bill would suspend through December 31, 2001, the general rate of duty on parts for use in the manufacture of loudspeakers, provided for in subheading 8518.90.80 of the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTS). These products are currently dutiable at 4.9 percent ad valorem.

Effective date: The 15th day after enactment.

Retroactive effect: None.

Statement of purpose:

Representative Spence made no statement about the bill in the *Congressional Record*. A major U.S. loudspeaker maker maintains that suspending the duty on parts used in the manufacture of loudspeakers will allow U.S. producers to become more competitive in export markets.⁵

Product description and uses:

Loudspeaker parts: The subject loudspeaker parts consist primarily of back plates, front plates,

¹ Industry analyst: James M. Brandon (205-3433); attorney: Jan Summers (205-2605).

² Representative Spence previously introduced H.R. 3401 (105th Congress), which would suspend the general duty on the subject goods through the end of 2002.

³ A Senate bill, S. 1852 (105th Congress), introduced by Senator Thurmond (SC), would suspend the general duty through the close of 2002 and is a companion bill to H.R. 3401.

⁴ See appendix A for definitions of tariff and trade agreement terms.

⁵ Telephone conversation with official of International Business-Government Counselors, Inc. (commenting on behalf of Bose Corporation).

baskets, cones, spiders, and coil wire. Once assembled, with parts of general use not covered by HTS subheading 8518.90.80, these parts form a loudspeaker.

Tariff treatment:⁶

<u>Product</u>	<u>HTS subheading</u>	<u>Col. 1-general rate of duty</u>
Loudspeaker parts.....	8518.90.80	4.9% ⁷

Structure of domestic industry (including competing products):

Loudspeaker parts: Parts used in the manufacture of loudspeakers are produced in the United States by a relatively small number of companies, with each company generally manufacturing specific component parts. Parts used in the manufacture of loudspeakers also are supplied to U.S. loudspeaker manufacturers by numerous importers and distributors that obtain these products almost exclusively from foreign sources.

Private-sector views:

The Commission contacted an international consulting group and four major domestic producers of loudspeaker parts.⁸ No written submissions about the bill had been received as of the date of preparation of this report.

U.S. consumption:

Loudspeaker parts :	<u>1994</u>	<u>1995</u>	<u>1996</u>
	-----(\$1,000)-----		
U.S. production.....	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)
U.S. imports.....	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)
U.S. exports.....	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)
Apparent U.S. consumption.....	(¹)	(¹)	(¹)

¹Not available.

Principal import sources: Not available.

Principal export markets: Not available.

⁶See appendix B for column 1-special and column 2 duty rates.

⁷This rate of duty is a “bound” rate under the U.S. schedule of concessions (Schedule XX) in the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations and is not scheduled for further duty reductions.

⁸The Commission made telephone contacts with the International Business-Government Counselors, Inc., Carver Corporation, Bose Corporation, Klipsch, and Polk Audio Inc.

Effect on customs revenue:⁹

Future (1998-2000) effect: Data on actual imports of the subject goods are not available, because of their classification in a residual or “basket” HTS category; no industry estimates have been received. The average annual revenue loss is expected to be less than \$6.4 million, which was the total general duty collected on imports of all goods (a portion of which were loudspeaker parts) imported under HTS subheading 8518.90.80 during 1997.

Retroactive effect: None.

Technical comments:

Although drafting the proposed description as a “use” provision narrows its scope (which is especially useful given the bound status of the existing duty), there may as a result be some administrative difficulties for the Customs Service in enforcing the bill; we defer to that agency for further comment.

⁹ Actual revenue loss may be understated if a significant increase in imports occurs during the duty suspension period.

APPENDIX A

TARIFF AND TRADE AGREEMENT TERMS

In the **Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States** (HTS), chapters 1 through 97 cover all goods in trade and incorporate in the tariff nomenclature the internationally adopted Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System through the 6-digit level of product description. Subordinate 8-digit product subdivisions, either enacted by Congress or proclaimed by the President, allow more narrowly applicable duty rates; 10-digit administrative statistical reporting numbers provide data of national interest. Chapters 98 and 99 contain special U.S. classifications and temporary rate provisions, respectively. The HTS replaced the **Tariff Schedules of the United States** (TSUS) effective January 1, 1989.

Duty rates in the **general** subcolumn of HTS column 1 are most-favored-nation (MFN) rates, many of which have been eliminated or are being reduced as concessions resulting from the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations. Column 1-general duty rates apply to all countries except those enumerated in HTS general note 3(b) (Afghanistan, Cuba, Laos, North Korea, and Vietnam), which are subject to the statutory rates set forth in **column 2**. Specified goods from designated MFN-eligible countries may be eligible for reduced rates of duty or for duty-free entry under one or more preferential tariff programs. Such tariff treatment is set forth in the **special** subcolumn of HTS rate of duty column 1 or in the general notes. If eligibility for special tariff rates is not claimed or established, goods are dutiable at column 1-general rates. The HTS does not enumerate those countries as to which a total or partial embargo has been declared.

The **Generalized System of Preferences** (GSP) affords nonreciprocal tariff preferences to developing countries to aid their economic development and to diversify and expand their production and exports. The U.S. GSP, enacted in title V of the Trade Act of 1974 for 10 years and extended several times thereafter, applies to merchandise imported on or after January 1, 1976 and before the close of June 30, 1998. Indicated by the symbol "A", "A*", or "A+" in the special subcolumn, the GSP provides duty-free entry to eligible articles the product of and imported directly from designated beneficiary developing countries, as set forth in general note 4 to the HTS.

The **Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act** (CBERA) affords nonreciprocal tariff preferences to developing countries in the Caribbean Basin area to aid their economic development and to diversify and expand their production and exports. The CBERA, enacted in title II of Public Law 98-67, implemented by Presidential Proclamation 5133 of November 30, 1983, and amended by the Customs and Trade Act of 1990, applies to merchandise entered, or withdrawn from warehouse for consumption, on or after January 1, 1984. Indicated by the symbol "E" or "E*" in the special subcolumn, the CBERA provides duty-free entry to eligible articles, and reduced-duty treatment to certain other articles, which are the product of and imported directly from designated countries, as set forth in general note 7 to the HTS.

Free rates of duty in the special subcolumn followed by the symbol "IL" are applicable to products of Israel under the **United States-Israel Free Trade Area Implementation Act** of 1985 (IFTA), as provided in general note 8 to the HTS.

Preferential nonreciprocal duty-free or reduced-duty treatment in the special subcolumn followed by the symbol "J" or "J*" in parentheses is afforded to eligible articles the product of designated beneficiary countries under the **Andean Trade Preference Act** (ATPA), enacted as title II of Public Law 102-182 and implemented by Presidential Proclamation 6455 of July 2, 1992 (effective July 22, 1992), as set forth in general note 11 to the HTS.

Preferential or free rates of duty in the special subcolumn followed by the symbol "CA" are applicable to eligible goods of Canada, and rates followed by the symbol "MX" are applicable to eligible goods of Mexico, under the **North American Free Trade Agreement**, as provided in general note 12 to the HTS and implemented effective January 1, 1994 by Presidential Proclamation 6641 of December 15, 1993. Goods must originate in the NAFTA region under rules set forth

in general note 12(t) and meet other requirements of the note and applicable regulations.

Other special tariff treatment applies to particular **products of insular possessions** (general note 3(a)(iv)), **products of the West Bank and Gaza Strip** (general note 3(a)(v)), goods covered by the **Automotive Products Trade Act** (APTA) (general note 5) and the **Agreement on Trade in Civil Aircraft** (ATCA) (general note 6), **articles imported from freely associated states** (general note 10), **pharmaceutical products** (general note 13), and **intermediate chemicals for dyes** (general note 14).

The **General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade 1994** (GATT 1994), pursuant to the Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization, is based upon the earlier GATT 1947 (61 Stat. (pt. 5) A58; 8 UST (pt. 2) 1786) as the primary multilateral system of disciplines and principles governing international trade. Signatories' obligations under both the 1994 and 1947 agreements focus upon most-favored-nation treatment, the maintenance of scheduled concession rates of duty, and national treatment for imported products; the GATT also provides the legal framework for customs valuation standards, "escape clause" (emergency) actions, antidumping and countervailing duties, dispute settlement, and other measures. The results of the Uruguay Round of multilateral tariff negotiations are set forth by way of separate schedules of concessions for each participating contracting party, with the U.S. schedule designated as Schedule XX.

Pursuant to the **Agreement on Textiles and Clothing** (ATC) of the GATT 1994, member countries are phasing out restrictions on imports under the prior "Arrangement Regarding International Trade in Textiles" (known as the **Multifiber Arrangement** (MFA)). Under the MFA, which was a departure from GATT 1947 provisions, importing and exporting countries negotiated bilateral agreements limiting textile and apparel shipments, and importing countries could take unilateral action in the absence or violation of an agreement. Quantitative limits had been established on imported textiles and apparel of cotton, other vegetable fibers, wool, man-made fibers or silk blends in an effort to prevent or limit market disruption in the importing countries. The ATC establishes notification and safeguard procedures, along with other rules concerning the customs treatment of textile and apparel shipments, and calls for the eventual complete integration of this sector into the GATT 1994 over a ten-year period, or by Jan. 1, 2005.

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APPENDIX B

**SELECTED PORTIONS OF THE
HARMONIZED TARIFF SCHEDULE OF THE UNITED STATES**

(Appendix not included in the electronic version of this report.)

105TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 3509

To suspend until December 31, 2001, the duty on parts for use in the
manufacture of loudspeakers.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 19, 1998

Mr. SPENCE introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on Ways and Means

A BILL

To suspend until December 31, 2001, the duty on parts
for use in the manufacture of loudspeakers.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SUSPENSION OF DUTY ON PARTS FOR USE IN**

4 **THE MANUFACTURE OF LOUDSPEAKERS.**

5 Subchapter II of chapter 99 of the Harmonized Tar-
6 iff Schedule of the United States is amended by inserting
7 in numerical sequence the following new subheading:

“	9902.85.xx	Parts for use in the manufacture of loudspeakers (pro- vided for in sub- heading 8518.90.80)	Free	No change	No change	On or before 12/31/2001	”.
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1 **SEC. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

2 The amendment made by section 1 applies with re-
3 spect to goods entered, or withdrawn from warehouse for
4 consumption, on or after the 15th day after the date of
5 the enactment of this Act.

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