

1. POLICY POSITION

GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

BACKGROUND

The Southern Legislative Conference endorses the United States' goals to eliminate trade barriers in foreign markets that have proved to be an impediment for state exporters. As the largest, most comprehensive trade agreement in history, the Uruguay Round Agreement works toward these ends. In addition to reducing global tariffs by over one third, the Agreement will protect intellectual property rights, reduce agricultural and industrial subsidies, ensure access for U. S. services and create a more effective system for settling disputes.

The Conference agrees that the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade would promote state exports, and urges the federal government to closely coordinate with states while executing the law. Also, the Conference endorses policies that facilitate trade and reduce export controls; the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade takes a step in that direction by decreasing the number of goods for which export licenses are required.

RECOMMENDATION

The Southern Legislative Conference recommends worker retraining in an effort to become more competitive. Federal-state programs for dislocated worker retraining and educational initiatives will help improve the international competitiveness of United States workers.

The Southern Legislative Conference, recognizing the potential for job creation and economic expansion from the Uruguay Round Agreement, calls for the effective and timely adoption of the Uruguay Round Agreement this year, and for the inclusion of state lawmakers in the implementation and execution of the Agreement, once adopted.