

GARY LOCKE
Governor



STATE OF WASHINGTON
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September 30, 2003

Ambassador Robert B. Zoellick
The United States Trade Representative
600 - 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20508

Dear Ambassador Zoellick:

I am responding to your recent letter requesting that Washington State extend its commitments under the World Trade Organization's Government Procurement Agreement (GPA) to the countries that are negotiating trade agreements with the United States.

With very limited exceptions, our laws and regulations ensure that state procurement is carried out in a non-discriminatory and transparent manner, consistent with the underlying principles of the GPA. These few exceptions are listed as exemptions under Washington State's commitments in Annex 2 of the GPA.

As your letter indicates, the United States is currently negotiating trade agreements with Morocco, Australia, the countries of the Central American Common Market (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua), and the South African Customs Union (Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland). In addition, thirty-four countries in the Western Hemisphere seek to finalize the negotiation of the Free Trade Area of the Americas in the near future.

Offering state-level government procurement coverage will ensure that our country receives similar access to the procurement markets of our trading partners. Therefore, I confirm that U.S. trade negotiators may offer coverage of Washington State government procurement as part of these negotiations, provided that such offer includes the state's exemptions under the GPA.

I appreciate your consulting with the state of Washington and look forward to the successful conclusion of these negotiations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Locke".

Gary Locke
Governor

cc: Senator Jim West, Majority Leader, Washington State
Senator Lisa Brown, Democratic Leader, Washington State
Representative Frank Chopp, Speaker of the House, Washington State
Representative Richard DeBoldt, Minority Leader, Washington State



bcc: Robert Hamilton, Governor's Advisor on Trade Policy