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Trade Group Calls For High Level Facilitator

Peter T. Leach | Mar 20, 2009 7:24PM GMT

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New England companies emphasize competitiveness along with enforcement

Newport, Rhode Island -- The proliferation of government regulations on both imports and exports in recent years is prompting a leading regional U.S. trade association to call for the creation of a high level government office to facilitate international trade.

“Who in government today is advocating trade facilitation?” asked Peter Friedmann, the counsel to the Coalition of New England Companies for Trade at its Northeast trade and transportation conference here March 20.

“We need a high level someone who looks at trade facilitation to keep us competitive,” he said.

Because so many new regulations have been created as security measures in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, Freidmann suggested that the office of trade facilitation should be established under an assistant secretary within the Department of Homeland Security.

The assistant secretary should be empowered to coordinate trade regulations and their enforcement across all agencies in government, including the TSA and FDA, he said.

He cited such regulations as 10+2, the Lacey Act and the Consumer Product Safety Act.

“We don’t want to argue against enforcing regulations designed to prevent lead in children’s toys but the problem is all these agencies were created to enforce regulations but no one is looking out for our competitiveness,” he said.