

February 24, 2011

U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission:

As American consumers and world citizens we are writing to express our hope that the SEC adopts the proposed amendment to the Dodd Frank Act. In this case the cost of protecting American manufacturing is too great not only to other local economic interests but to human life. A choice to not implement Section 1502 of the Dodd-Frank Act would not represent a simple decision to protect American manufacturing interests; it would instead signify America's conscious choice to turn its back on the world's deadliest conflict. As a peace loving nation, it would be irresponsible to continue to incentivize the use of minerals which fuel the conflict.

We were both appalled to hear that by making electronics purchases from American corporations, we could be contributing to one of the most bloody and horrific conflicts in history. An estimated 5.4 million people have died in the conflict since 1996, more than 93 times the U.S. military casualties suffered in Vietnam. Over one million people have been displaced, many of whom will never see their homes or families again. Systematic rape is prevalent, and young children are forced to participate in the violence. While we recognize that the proposed amendment will not stop the conflict, we are sure that there are many others who, like us, are horrified at these atrocities and would be eager to do what they could to, at the very least, avoid funding the violence.

Further, we believe the U.S. has a strong economic and political interest in restoring peace to central Africa. As the world's strongest advocate of international human rights and as the largest contributor of foreign aid and relief, the U.S. interest in resolving this horrible conflict is clear. For American citizens to continue to fund the atrocities would discredit it in its role as a human rights beacon and leader. It would be counterproductive, and adverse to U.S. economic interests, to continue to fund a conflict that Americans are likely to pay millions to abate.

While we understand that the US is one of the largest electronics manufacturers in the world and that it has a strong interest in protecting the industry, the U.S. also has a stronger interest in promoting transparent business practices. Transparency like that put forward in the proposed amendment is essential to a well functioning American market and free democratic society.

For these reasons, we believe the proposed amendment is in the interest of the United States economically, morally and politically.

Sincerely,

Lewis Citrenbaum & Joseph Kelly
Law Students, Georgetown University Law Center