

Customs Announces New Office of Trade

September 14, 2006

Yesterday, U.S. Customs and Border Protection Commissioner Ralph Basham announced a reorganization that will consolidate its trade policy, program development and compliance measurement functions into the new "Office of Trade." Currently, these functions are split among the following three offices within Customs and Border Protection ("CBP"): the Office of Strategic Trade, the Office of Regulations and Rulings, and the Office of Field Operations. By combining the three functions into one office, CBP hopes to avoid dual reporting mechanisms and overlapping management structures that can disrupt the closely interrelated activities of CBP officers and operators at U.S. ports of entry processing arriving cargo.

The new office is slated to begin operations October 15, 2006. The extent to which this reorganization will affect existing functions of the Office of Regulations and Rulings, the office responsible for issuing legal interpretations of CBP laws and regulations affecting commercial imports, remains to be seen. The Commissioner announced that Dan Baldwin, currently the Assistant Commissioner of CBP's Office of Strategic Trade, will head the new Office of Trade as Assistant Commissioner.

We Can Help

If you have any questions regarding the new Office of Trade, or any other Customs matter, please contact one of the Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP Customs and International Trade attorneys or professionals listed below.

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