



CEPA Calls for Leaders in Washington to Utilize CAFTA-DR, Address Root Causes of Migration

WASHINGTON, D.C., (October 17, 2022) -- The [Coalition for Economic Partnerships in the Americas](#) (CEPA), a group of major American companies and manufacturers dedicated to promoting regional trade and job growth, today released the following statement regarding a continued decline in utilization of the Central America-Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR):

“Utilization rates for CAFTA-DR have seen a steady decline for several years, which is something that should be concerning not just for industry leaders, but for U.S. policymakers, as well.” **said CEPA spokesperson Beth Hughes.** “As political leaders in Washington look to move supply chains closer to U.S. shores, foster greater stability in Central America, and address the current immigration crisis, ensuring agreements like CAFTA-DR can be utilized fully will be critical. To make that possible, access to diverse inputs is needed to address the problems revealed by these falling utilization rates.”

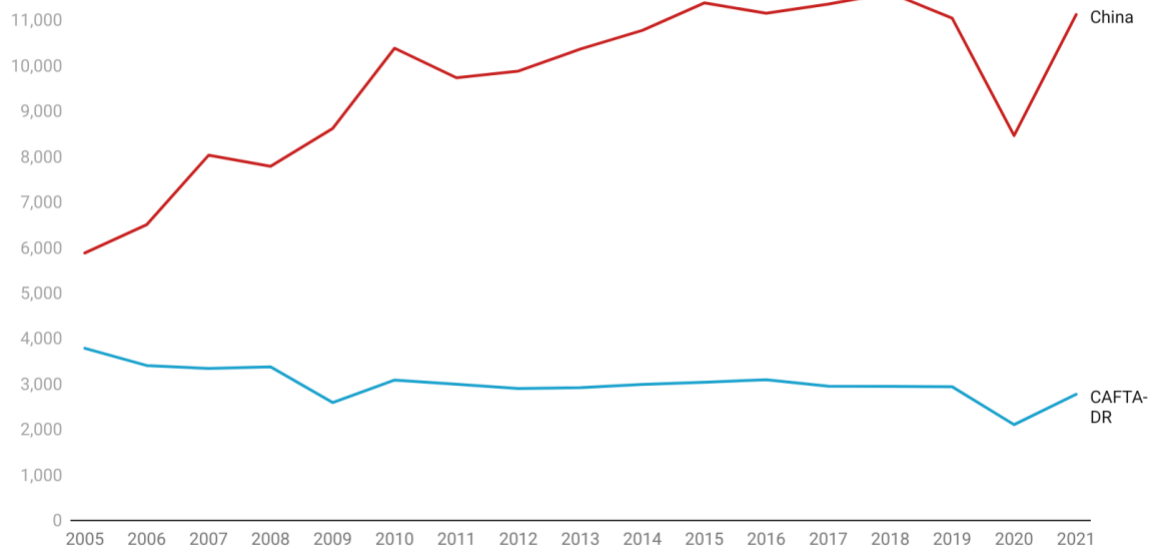
Imports under CAFTA-DR – especially in the apparel industry – still lag far behind imports from China. Addressing the obstacles to utilizing CAFTA-DR to its fullest extent represents a significant opportunity to boost investment in the Western Hemisphere, foster economic growth in the region, and move supply chains closer to the U.S.

Further details are available below:

- The value of apparel imports from CAFTA-DR were 5% lower in 2021 than in 2005 when the agreement was first reached, while during the same period apparel imports from all sources increased by over 18%.
- Every year since CAFTA-DR has been in effect, the value of apparel imports has been lower than when the agreement was first reached in 2005.
- The share of U.S. apparel imports that came from CAFTA-DR over this period has shrunk from 13.2% in 2005 to 10.6% in 2021.

Quantity of US Apparel Imports (2005-2021)

Unit: Million Square Meter Equivalent (SME)



Data source: OTEXA, U.S. Department of Commerce (2022)

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