

Practice Update

U.S. Announces Goods and Services Eligible for Import

February 18, 2015

On February 13, 2015, the U.S. State Department issued new regulations regarding goods and services eligible for export from Cuba to the United States. The new regulations open a new chapter in U.S.–Cuba trade relations that will support the rise of private economic activity on the island. For the first time in 50+ years, Cuban entrepreneurs in the nascent private sector will be able to sell products and services to American businesses. While important elements of the embargo remain intact, the decision to allow imports from Cuban entrepreneurs is another major departure from past policies of isolation and toward a new era of engagement and normalization. There is great potential for these changes to generate new markets for Cuba’s self-employed workers and small business owners. The ultimate impact will depend on whether the Cuban government will allow Cuba’s private sector to take advantage of the huge new market opening these policies create.

Learn more about the impact of the new regulations by reading the following articles:

Politico: [“U.S. cracks open door for some Cuban imports”](#)

Miami Herald: [“U.S. releases rules for imports from Cuba”](#)

Reuters: [“U.S. eases restrictions on imports from private Cubans”](#)

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About the Authors

Pedro A. Freyre is chair of Akerman's International Practice. He is a nationally recognized authority on the U.S. Embargo on Cuba. Pedro advises U.S.-based companies on the types of business transactions that are legal in Cuba under the U.S. embargo, helps U.S. entities that are engaged in authorized activities in connection with entering the Cuban market, and advises foreign entities that are involved in Cuba business on implications with U.S. law. He is a Lecturer of Law at Columbia University School of Law, where he co-teaches a seminar titled "Cuba: Law Policy and Transition."

Augusto E. Maxwell is chair of Akerman's Cuba Practice and has travelled extensively to the island in representation of U.S. clients. He is a Lecturer of Law at Columbia University School of Law, where he co-teaches a seminar titled "Cuba: Law Policy and Transition."

Carlos E. Méndez-Peñate is co-chair of Akerman's Latin America & the Caribbean Practice and he focuses his practice on investing and financing matters in the region. In association with the Council of the Americas, Carlos is a regular participant in high-level delegations to Cuba during which economic reform and entrepreneurship issues are discussed with high-ranking Cuban government officials and foreign diplomats.

Matthew D. Aho helps clients identify opportunities at the nexus of Cuba policy and business. While at the Council of the Americas, the Western Hemisphere's premiere business membership organization, he led discussions between Fortune 500 executives and U.S. government officials about Cuba policies affecting banking, telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, hospitality, agriculture, and more. Matthew is an authority on the embargo and frequently accompanies clients to

the island. He is a member of the Cuba Study Group.
(Not admitted to the practice of law.)

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