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January 24, 2008

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate

The Honorable Mitchell McConnell
Republican Leader, U.S. Senate

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Republican Leader McConnell:

On behalf of the Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA), representing the world's largest and fastest growing retail companies, I thank you for your commitment to strengthening our nation's economy and encourage you to act quickly to pass a common-sense fiscal stimulus package. A timely agreement will directly benefit your constituents and our customers.

RILA members account for more than \$1.5 trillion in annual sales, provide millions of jobs and operate more than 100,000 stores, manufacturing facilities and distribution centers domestically and abroad.

The Department of Commerce announced earlier this month that December 2007 retail sales - a leading indicator of the U.S. economy - were down 0.4 percent over the previous month. With retail on the front line of the U.S. economy and more than two-thirds of our economy driven by consumer spending, we understand that putting money back in the hands of Americans is the surest way to jumpstart an economic recovery.

We know from experience that immediate consumer relief is highly effective in quickly stimulating the economy. As such, we urge Congress's swift passage of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Sandra L. Kennedy
President