



PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

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As a further step in the Government's efforts to prevent the extension of the Export Enhancement Program to the Soviet Union and China, I have decided that an all party delegation should travel to the United States this week to put Australia's concerns personally to members of the Congress.

The delegation will seek to persuade key Congressmen of the devastating consequences for Australia, and especially for Australian rural producers, of extending the EEP to the Soviet Union and China.

The delegation will be headed by the Minister for Primary Industry, Mr Kerin. It will also include the Chairman of the Caucus Committee on Rural Affairs, Mr Barry Cunningham, who also heads my Country Task Force. The other three members of the delegation will be nominated by their respective parties.

I have today informed the Opposition spokesman on Primary Industry, Mr Hunt, of my decision. The Australian Democrats spokesman in this area, Senator Macklin, has also been informed.

I expect the delegation to leave for the U.S. about the middle of this week. Although there appears to be no definite time scale for the final passage of the relevant legislation, the Congress is unlikely to have completed its consideration of the proposed extension at least until the following week.

The proposed extension of the EEP has precipitated this decision to send a joint delegation, a concept which I had been discussing with Mr Dawkins and Mr Kerin and for which I had received strong indications of support from Mr Hunt.

Today's decision follows a series of measures I have taken over the last few days in an attempt to prevent the extension of the EEP. Last Thursday night, I telephoned U.S. Secretary of State Shultz to discuss our concerns with him. On Friday, I spoke with Canadian Prime Minister Mulroney, and I wrote to Argentine President Alfonsin, suggesting that similar representations be made by them to the U.S. Administration. On Friday night, I spoke by telephone with Senator Richard Lugar, Chairman of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee and a member of the Senator Agriculture Committee.

I also sent on Friday messages to Congressional leaders explaining the potential impact of the proposed legislation on Australia.