

July 23, 2008  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Jewelers of America Applauds Action on Burmese Gemstones**

*Congress Approves Tom Lantos Block Burmese JADE Act of 2008; Legislation Sent to President*

New York – Jewelers of America, which last fall called upon Congress to amend the Burmese Freedom & Democracy Act of 2003 to include gemstones mined in Burma, commends the U.S. Congress for passing a bill to that effect on July 22, entitled: *Tom Lantos Block Burmese JADE (Junta's Anti-Democratic Efforts) Act of 2008*. The legislation, which now goes to President George W. Bush for signature, prohibits the importation of Burmese jadeite and rubies, and jewelry containing those gemstones.

“Jewelers of America welcomes the passage of this important amendment and stands ready to work with the Administration as it moves to implement the new requirements,” says President and CEO Matthew A. Runci.

Jewelers of America, representing 11,000 member stores in the United States, issued an advisory to its members last fall, detailing its deep concern about the Burmese military government's longstanding human rights violations. “Jewelers of America members believe it is their responsibility to support and respect the protection of international human rights within their sphere of influence and to make sure the sourcing of gemstones is not complicit in human rights abuses, in line with the commitments they assume to the association's Statement of Principles,” Runci said at the time.

“These commitments include adherence to the principles of U.N. Global Compact, which JA has agreed to support.” To see the complete Jewelers of America Statement of Principles go to: [www.jewelers.org/aboutJA/responsibility.html](http://www.jewelers.org/aboutJA/responsibility.html).

Some of the steps Jewelers of America asked its members to take last fall included contacting their suppliers to ascertain whether any of the gems they supplied were from Burma. The association also urged members to seek, on all future orders placed, written

assurances from their suppliers that they would not knowingly supply any gems mined in Burma, until the process of democratic reform had started in that country.

For more information contact the Public Affairs Department:

Peggy Jo Donahue  
Director of Public Affairs  
[pjdonahue@jewelers.org](mailto:pjdonahue@jewelers.org)  
(646) 658-5802

Susan Thea Posnock  
Public Affairs Manager  
[sposnock@jewelers.org](mailto:sposnock@jewelers.org)  
(646) 658-5806

Lauren Thompson  
Public Affairs Coordinator  
[lthompson@jewelers.org](mailto:lthompson@jewelers.org)  
(646) 658-5817

*For more information about Jewelers of America, visit [www.jewelers.org](http://www.jewelers.org).*

*Jewelers of America is the national trade association for retail jewelers. With 11,000 member stores, JA is both a center of knowledge for the jeweler and an advocate for professionalism and high social, ethical, and environmental standards in the jewelry trade. JA provides access to meaningful educational programs and services and leadership in public and industry affairs.*

###