



**PRESS RELEASE
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Megan Whitmire
Marketing Manager
megan@agta.org
(214) 742-4367

Amanda Gizzi
Director of PR & Events
agizzi@jewelers.org
(646) 658-5811

AGTA & JA Lead Gemstone Delegation in Myanmar

The trip is focused on re-establishing direct lines of commerce between the countries

Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar - A delegation representing the United States gemstone and jewelry industry is in Myanmar (Burma) discussing bilateral trade between the two countries. Led by American Gem Trade Association (AGTA) President Jeffrey Bilgore, AGTA CEO Douglas Hucker, Jewelers of America (JA) President & CEO David J. Bonaparte, and Gemological Institute of America's (GIA) Dr. Jim Shigley, the trip's main purpose is re-establishing direct lines of commerce between Myanmar and the United States. Also joining the delegation is Timothy Haake of Haake/Fetzer, senior counsel to JA, and the Inle Advisory Group, a Myanmar-centric business consulting firm.

"Our goal in coming here is to demonstrate that the gem sector in Myanmar is as worthy as any in the world, and that responsible commerce can only help all of us improve and make democracy stronger," says Bilgore.

"We are here to share with the people of Myanmar what our U.S. trade associations do to ensure product integrity, increase consumer confidence, and maintain responsible supply chains," added Bonaparte.

The delegation met with a wide range of stakeholders in Myanmar from the gemstone industry, government, and civil society. The next stage of the trip will include visits to observe mining conditions and practices in Mogok.

This is the first meeting between U.S. and Myanmar gemstone and jewelry representatives since President Barack Obama announced last month that the U.S. will lift the remaining economic sanctions on the country.

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About American Gem Trade Association:

The American Gem Trade Association (AGTA) is a not-for-profit Association serving the natural colored gemstone and cultured pearl industry since 1981. The

AGTA serves the industry as "The Authority in Color" and has its headquarter office in Dallas, Texas. Visit www.agta.org for more information.

About Jewelers of America:

Jewelers of America (JA) is the national trade association for businesses serving the fine jewelry marketplace, with the primary purpose of improving consumer confidence in the jewelry industry. Visit www.jewelers.org for more information.



Jeffrey Bilgore, David J. Bonaparte, Douglas Hucker and Dr. Jim Shigley meet with Myanmar officials H.E. U Ohn Winn, Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation; U Htay Aung, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation; U Aung Nyunt Thein, Managing Director, Myanmar Gems Enterprise; U Min Min Oo, Managing Director, Myanmar Pearl Enterprise; U Ye Myint Swe, Director General, Department of Geological Survey and Mineral Exploration; and U Win Htein, Director General, Department of Mines



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