US lawmakers have voted overwhelmingly to extend a key trade programme that gives eligible African countries duty-free access to the American market, keeping the arrangement in place through the end of 2028.

The House of Representatives on Tuesday approved a government funding bill containing the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) extension by 370 votes to 48. The measure had already cleared the Senate in August by 90 votes to six and now goes to President Donald Trump for his signature.

The bill would extend AGOA for two years without making major changes to the programme. It comes after months of uncertainty over the future of the trade arrangement, which has been a major channel for African exports to the US since it was introduced in 2000.

AGOA expired in September 2025 before being temporarily restored earlier this year through the end of 2026. The latest extension would give eligible Sub-Saharan African countries another two years of preferential access to the US market.

The programme has been particularly important for industries such as textiles and apparel, agriculture and other manufactured goods. Its extension is expected to provide exporters with more time to plan production and maintain their access to the US market.

For African governments and businesses, however, the two-year extension offers relief rather than a long-term solution.

Oge Onubogu, director of the Africa Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said the extension does not provide the certainty businesses and governments need to make longer-term investment decisions.

The broader question, she said, is what the United States’ long-term economic strategy for Africa will look like, regardless of which administration is in power.

“Regardless of what administration is in office, what is the US’ long-term economic vision for Africa?” Onubogu said.

The uncertainty is particularly significant because AGOA’s duty-free access sits uneasily alongside the Trump administration’s wider push for tariffs and a more protectionist US trade policy.

African governments had pushed for a much longer extension. South Africa, for example, had lobbied for AGOA to be renewed for 15 years rather than the two years contained in the latest legislation.

The new legislation nevertheless gives exporters a longer planning window than the current arrangement, which is due to end this year if the extension is not signed into law.

The US legislation also includes provisions important to the African apparel industry, including continued preferential treatment linked to regional apparel production and the use of third-country fabrics.

For now, the extension is likely to be welcomed by African exporters that have faced uncertainty over whether their products would continue to enter the US duty-free.

But the relatively short renewal also leaves the same question hanging over the programme: whether Washington will eventually commit to a longer-term framework for US-Africa trade or continue renewing AGOA in short intervals.