



# Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **BAUCUS CONDITIONS SUPPORT FOR US-KOREA FTA ON KOREA'S FULL ACCEPTANCE OF U.S. BEEF**

*Senator Urges Koreans to Fully Open Market To U.S. Beef*

*Gallatin Gateway, MT* – U.S. Sen. Max Baucus (D-Mont.), Ranking Democrat on the U.S. Senate Finance Committee, today ate a Montana T-bone steak in front of major Korean news outlets to prove the point that U.S. beef is safe and that Korea must fully open its markets to all U.S. beef – boneless, bone-in, and offals. Baucus is in Montana to kick off a fifth round of trade negotiations for the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement. As part of these negotiations, Baucus is insisting Korea open its market to U.S. beef. He made that point clear to Ambassador Tae Sik Lee and to Korean press today.

**“I have a beef with Korea,”** Baucus told Korean reporters before a meeting with the Korean Ambassador to the U.S. and top officials from both countries. **“Our beef is the safest, highest quality in the world. Korea’s beef ban, including its rejection of two U.S. beef shipments this week, is not based on sound science. If we are to move forward with full trade between our two countries, this ban cannot stand.”**

Korea closed its market to U.S. beef imports in 2003, following reports of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or BSE, from cattle that originated in Canada. Prior to the ban, the U.S. beef industry sold about \$800 million to Korea, one of Montana's largest export markets. Korea partially opened its market in September of this year to beef imports from cattle under the age of 30 months, but the country continues to prohibit beef products that contain bone material. International scientific standards support the safety of U.S. beef – whether boneless and bone-in – regardless of age.

The senior U.S. senator called a news conference with top Korean media outlets before a brunch at the Gallatin Gateway Inn near Bozeman. A chef then presented Baucus a prime Montana-raised T-bone, which he took a bite of and then said in Korean, "Ma shuh soom nee dah," which in English means "This is very delicious."

**“We in Montana know how good our beef is. I want to make sure the Korean people do too,”** Baucus said. **“Montana cattle producers are ready to do business.”**

In January, Baucus will become chairman of the U.S. Senate Finance Committee, which has jurisdiction over international trade agreements.

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