



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

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BAUCUS FRUSTRATED BY THE RESULTS OF HONG KONG MINISTERIAL

Senator Believes Doha Round Heading Off-Track

Washington, DC – Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.), Ranking Member of the U.S. Senate Finance Committee, released the following statement in response to tonight's conclusion of the WTO's Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong:

"I admire the perseverance and patience of Ambassador Portman and the U.S. negotiating team. They struggled hard this week to keep the Hong Kong talks together. But sometimes no deal is better than a bad deal. And to be frank, the deal in Hong Kong does very little to advance key U.S. interests in agriculture, manufacturing, and services. Certain aspects of the agreed text also leave me very concerned.

"Negotiations are supposed to be give-and-take. But here, the United States is doing all of the giving while our trading partners, both developed and developing, are doing all of the taking. The United States – already the world's most open economy – has offered serious concessions in agriculture. But rather than make any real counteroffers, our trading partners only appear interested in pocketing what we offer and then demanding more.

"Instead, a successful round will require trading partners to agree to equally significant concessions. For instance, the EU will have to reduce its agricultural tariffs and domestic support payments. Canada and Australia will have to reform their state-trading enterprises. Brazil and India will have to make deep reductions in their industrial tariffs. And developing world economies will have to provide meaningful market access in the services sector.

"Unless the dynamics of the Doha Round change soon, Members of Congress may find it difficult to continue offering their support. Negotiators have set an April 30 deadline to make new progress. Let's see what happens. But I'm not optimistic. U.S. producers of goods, services, and farm products – particularly Montana's farmers and ranchers – will

have to get far more than our trading partners have already given for any deal to be worth their while."

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