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Contact: Carol Guthrie
(202) 224-4515

**BAUCUS IRKED OVER LACK OF PROGRESS
ON BEEF IN BEIJING**

Chairman urges immediate progress in lifting China's beef ban

Washington, DC – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) expressed strong disappointment over lack of progress in opening the Chinese market to U.S. beef during this week's Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade (JCCT) talks in Beijing. JCCT meetings ended yesterday with progress on some issues, but with no commitments by China to lift its unscientific restrictions on U.S. beef. Senior U.S. and Chinese officials continue meetings this week in Beijing in the context of the Strategic Economic Dialogue (SED).

“My patience with China is running out on the beef issue,” said Baucus. **“While there are many complexities in U.S.-China ties, opening China to U.S. beef is pretty straightforward. The world's scientists and consumers agree that American beef is safe and second to none. I find it hard to understand why the JCCT talks made no progress on beef, especially in light of previous commitments made by China on this issue. I hope that Ambassador Schwab and Secretary Paulson resolve this issue in their remaining days in Beijing.”**

During the April 2006 JCCT meeting, China committed to open its market to American beef and beef products and in May 2007 pledged to open its market to U.S. boneless and bone-in beef from cattle younger than 30 months of age. Since that time, the World Animal Health Organization (OIE) has certified the safety of all U.S. beef, bone-in and boneless, regardless of age.

Baucus and Finance Committee Ranking Republican Member Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) wrote to Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez, and United States Trade Representative Susan Schwab on December 7, outlining expectations for the JCCT and SED. To see the text of that letter, please visit the Finance Committee website at the following URL:

<http://www.finance.senate.gov/press/Bpress/2007press/prb120707.pdf>.

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