



# Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Baucus Pleased by Completion of U.S.-Morocco Free Trade Agreement Negotiations** *Senator Presses for Further Engagement with Middle East, Increased Trade Opportunities*

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) U.S. Senator Max Baucus, ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee, released the following statement regarding the U.S.-Morocco Free Trade Agreement talks, which were completed today:

"Today, the United States successfully concluded a free trade agreement with Morocco, and I congratulate our trade negotiators. Morocco is an important ally in a region that needs our support. We must continue to do more to improve our economic relationship with the Middle East.

I support the long-term goal of increasing free trade with the Middle East. That said, we need a comprehensive, short-term policy to help increase trade and create jobs in that region. Last year, Senator McCain and I introduced S.1121, the Middle East Trade and Engagement Act, which would accomplish that goal.

Our legislation will build stronger and more effective commercial relationships in a region of the world where economic hope is unfortunately non-existent. It is in our interest, as well as theirs, to reach out and build a common future.

As for the agreement itself, I am pleased that the agreement secures access into Morocco for U.S. products that is at least as good as the European Union enjoys, and in some cases better. This is an important principle, and reflects the ambitiousness of both parties.

In particular, Morocco has agreed to establish tariff-rate quotas for beef that grow over time, providing significantly increased access to the important market in high-quality beef. In this respect, the U.S. will have superior access than not only the European Union (EU) but virtually every one else, as well. I am further satisfied that this agreement ultimately levels the playing field between U.S. wheat producers and the EU, though the transition to parity is longer than I prefer. Importantly, the agreement guarantees that U.S. wheat, beef, and other agriculture products will always enjoy preferential access versus future Moroccan FTA partners.

I welcome Morocco into the larger network of U.S. free trade partners, and I applaud Ambassador Zoellick for continuing to move ahead on free trade. But I must reiterate my concern over the prioritization of USTR resources. As we move ahead, we need to focus on trade agreements with larger markets and improve the enforcement of existing agreements. We need to ensure that we are using trade to create opportunities for American exports, American companies, and American jobs."

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