



# Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

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## **VIEWS AT TRADE SECURITY FORUM LEAD BAUCUS TO CALL FOR MORE CUSTOMS FUNDING IN UPCOMING AUTHORIZATION**

*Finance Committee Ranking Member hosted panel this morning to discuss  
international trade and cargo security after downfall of Dubai ports deal*

*Washington, DC* – U.S. Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.), Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee, will call for a funding increase for the Bureau of U.S. Customs and Border Patrol when legislation to reauthorize the agency is considered later this year. The Finance Committee, which has jurisdiction over the commercial operations of U.S. Customs, is expected to consider such a bill this spring. Today Baucus led a forum to assess international trade and cargo security in the aftermath of the Dubai Ports World controversy. A panel of experts debated the future of foreign investment in U.S. port facilities, and discussed the real challenges in securing the safety of cargo without crippling the just-in-time global supply chain and the U.S. economy. Panelists said that technology exists to screen cargo containers overseas before they head to U.S. ports, but personnel and other resources are lacking to effectively read and analyze security data.

**“International trade brings more than 1200 containers to U.S. ports every hour. Right now U.S. Customs is able to inspect about five percent of containers upon arrival – when it’s too late to stop anything harmful from reaching our shores,”** said Baucus. **“Technology exists to do the job better, scanning more U.S.-bound containers in foreign ports. Customs should have the resources to proliferate new trade security technologies, and to use the full potential of those technologies to keep Americans safe.”**

At today’s forum, panelists with long experience in international trade, port operations, and cargo security debated the appropriate roles for port operators, importers, and U.S. Customs in facilitating international trade while achieving real cargo and port security. Experts included Clark Kent Ervin, former Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security, Port of Seattle CEO Mic Dinsmore, retired Navy Captain Joe Bouchard, now Executive Director of the Center for Homeland Security and Defense at Zel Technologies, CFIUS expert David Marchick, and Gary Gilbert, Senior Vice President for Hutchison Port Holdings. Panelist testimony is available at <http://finance.senate.gov/sitepages/baucus.htm>. While many held differing views on the advisability of the now-defunct deal to allow Dubai Ports World to operate several U.S. ports, all agreed that an appropriate balance must be struck to ensure Americans’ security and keep international trade – a major engine of the U.S. economy – running smoothly. Facilitation of international trade falls under the jurisdiction of the Senate Finance Committee.

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**“An intricate web of moving parts makes up the booming world of international trade. Today, everything that American manufacturers need arrives just in time. We have to thread the needle here and protect their supply chains without grinding trade to a halt,”** said Baucus. **“It was time to ask the experts today how we can find a balance that allows for national security and economic strength as well. One of the best options I heard today is taking security global, instead of waiting for cargo to hit our shores. I believe you can have more security and less slowdown if you do it right.”**

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