



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

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BAUCUS DISAPPOINTED BY DELAY FOR VIETNAM PNTR

Senator urged permanent normalization of trade relations prior to President's Hanoi visit

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Max Baucus (D.-Mont.), Ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, commented today on the House of Representatives' decision to delay a vote to grant permanent normal trade relations (PNTR) status to Vietnam. Baucus, who authored the Senate legislation on Vietnam PNTR, had urged passage of the bill prior to President George W. Bush's visit to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Hanoi this week. The Vietnam PNTR bill failed to get a two-thirds vote on the House suspension calendar last night, and House leadership declined to take up the bill again today. The vote is now expected to occur in December.

“This is incredibly disappointing, particularly in light of the President's visit to Vietnam this week. Vietnam is a country of 83 million consumers, and their accession to the World Trade Organization can help boost American businesses and create jobs here at home,” said Baucus. **“It's long past time to grant Vietnam permanent normal trade relations. I guess we could say better late than never, but in this case late is not good.”**

Vietnam has been invited by the WTO to become its 150th member. Until the United States grants Vietnam PNTR, we cannot benefit from any WTO commitments made by Vietnam. Meanwhile, China, Europe, Japan, and other WTO members will receive the benefits of Vietnam's WTO accession, including increased trade with Vietnam's businesses and citizens.

PNTR is a pledge of non-discrimination. A grant of PNTR is a promise not to treat imports from one country more harshly than those from another country. .

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