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BAUCUS SEES NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR CUBA POLICY
Castro's Resignation Should Allow U.S. to Begin to Resume Trade and Travel

Today, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) commented on Fidel Castro's resignation as Cuba's President. Baucus has been a longtime advocate of reforming U.S. economic policies toward Cuba and reexamining the decades-old restrictions on trade and travel.

"Fidel Castro's welcome resignation provides a new opportunity to revisit our failed Cuba policies and put U.S.-Cuba relations on a new path," said Baucus. **"It is time to get our Cuba policy right for America's farmers and ranchers – including those in my home state of Montana, who are ready to sell their goods to Cuban buyers – and for families across the Florida Straits by beginning to ease trade and travel restrictions now."**

Last summer, Baucus -- along with Senator Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) and Representatives Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.) and Jo Ann Emerson (R-Mo.), introduced legislation to make it easier for U.S. farmers and ranchers to sell their world-class products to Cuba by easing restrictions on travel to and payment from Cuba. Baucus held a hearing on the "Promoting American Agricultural and Medical Exports to Cuba Act of 2007" on December 11, 2007, and is working with colleagues in the Senate to move the bill forward this year.

An independent International Trade Commission study commissioned by Baucus found that removing U.S. export restrictions would increase the annual U.S. share of Cuba's agriculture imports to as much as nearly 70 percent, representing an annual boost of over \$300 million in U.S. agriculture sales.

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