



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

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Baucus Urges World Trade Organization Negotiations Forward

(Washington, D.C.) U.S. Senator Max Baucus, Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee, released the following statement in response to the public release of a letter by U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick to other World Trade Organization (WTO) ministers:

“I am pleased that Ambassador Zoellick has taken the initiative to revitalize the WTO negotiations and to urge his counterparts around the world to return to the negotiating table. The WTO is – and must remain – our number one priority. In the weeks immediately following the Cancun Ministerial, it was appropriate for WTO members to take some time to reflect on their individual priorities. It has now been four months since those talks fell apart, and it is past time for all members to get back to work. I am hopeful that Ambassador Zoellick’s letter will spark a renewed effort.

I have said many times before that USTR needs to focus its negotiating resources on the most commercially meaningful agreements possible. Everyone knows that a Doha agreement would pack more economic punch than any bilateral or regional free trade agreement. Everyone also knows that we can’t tackle the paramount global issues – such as true reform of global agriculture - outside of a multilateral forum. I support Ambassador Zoellick’s call for the complete elimination of agriculture export subsidies by a date certain, and his reiteration for an ambitious reform agenda with comprehensive participation.

With that said, I am disappointed the Administration continues to ignore problems with the WTO dispute settlement process. The credibility of the WTO – and domestic political support for the Administration’s trade agenda - rests on legitimate international dispute settlement processes. Nevertheless, Ambassador Zoellick’s letter comes at an important time, and I am pleased by his effort.”

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