



For Immediate Release
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**Floor Statement of Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.)
Regarding the Customs Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Reauthorization Act**

(as submitted for the record)

Representative John Randolph, Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee in the early 1800s, said, "We all know our duty better than we discharge it."

U.S. Customs and Border Protection, or CBP, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, have two vital duties. They must protect our national security by ensuring that threats to that security do not cross our borders. And they must protect our economic security by ensuring that legitimate trade does cross our borders, smoothly and quickly. I have no doubt that CBP and ICE know these duties. But they must do a better job of discharging their trade duties.

Yesterday, Senator Grassley and I introduced a bill that would require the agencies to do just that. The Customs Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Reauthorization Act of 2009 would direct CBP and ICE to make customs facilitation and trade enforcement a priority again. And it would provide the agencies with the tools and resources that they need to fully discharge those duties.

These agencies know that high-level officials must focus on their trade duties. The bill would help the agencies discharge those duties by creating new high-level positions at CBP devoted exclusively to trade. And the bill would assign new trade facilitation and enforcement duties to the highest level official at ICE.

The agencies know that they must facilitate and expedite legitimate trade across our borders. The bill would help the agencies to discharge those duties by providing trade facilitation benefits, such as faster customs clearance, to importers with a history of complying with U.S. customs and trade laws. The bill would also require the Secretary of Homeland Security to identify and provide trade facilitation benefits to importers that provide additional security information. And the bill would provide funding for automated programs that would help CBP process imports more quickly.

The agencies know that they must enforce U.S. trade, intellectual property, and health and safety laws at our borders. The bill would help the agencies to discharge those duties by giving CBP new tools to identify goods that are most likely to violate these laws. It would give CBP the means to prevent those goods from crossing our borders. And it would require ICE to do more to prevent the importation of goods made with forced, convict, or indentured labor.

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The agencies know that they must listen to Congress and the business community when taking significant actions that affect America's competitiveness. The bill would help the agencies to discharge that duty by requiring CBP to engage in robust consultation before taking such steps.

And the agencies know that they must serve rural border areas, such as those in my home state of Montana. The bill would help the agencies to discharge that duty by creating a pilot program to establish 24-hour ports along these border areas, ensuring that legitimate trade can flow quickly through these areas.

So let us come together to reauthorize CBP and ICE. Let us give these agencies the tools and resources they need to facilitate and enforce international trade. And let us help CBP and ICE to discharge these duties that are so essential to our economic security.

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