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BAUCUS HEADS TO RUSSIA TO SEEK JOB-CREATING TRADE OPPORTUNITIES FOR U.S. EXPORTERS, DISCUSS FOREIGN AFFAIRS ISSUES

Finance Chair to Meet with President Medvedev, Ministers of Trade, Agriculture, Foreign Affairs

Washington, DC – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) is headed today to Russia to meet with senior government officials to discuss key economic, trade and foreign affairs issues, and to pursue new trade opportunities for U.S. businesses, ranchers and farmers. Baucus will seek resolution of persistent irritants to the U.S.-Russia trade relationship that block sales of American exports and raise foreign policy concerns, including Russia's position on Syria and Iran. Baucus's trip, which will take him to St. Petersburg and Moscow through February 22, comes in advance of Russia's expected accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) later this year.

"Opening doors overseas in countries like Russia will propel our economic recovery forward and create jobs across the United States," Baucus said. **"Holding Russia to its promises as it enters the WTO and seeking a greater share of the Russian market is a one-way economic benefit for the United States and an absolute no-brainer. This trip will help lead Russia to end its unfair trade practices that hurt American businesses, ranchers and farmers."**

WTO Members formally invited Russia to join the WTO in December 2011. Under the rules governing the accession process, Russia will become a WTO Member 30 days after it ratifies its accession agreement, which it must do by early July. If by that point Congress has not passed legislation granting Russia permanent normal trade relations (PNTR), the United States will not enjoy the full economic benefits of Russia joining the WTO. It is expected American exports to Russia could double within five years of Russia joining the WTO from the current level of around \$9 billion per year.

The package of concessions Russia agreed to before receiving its official WTO invitation will lower tariffs for a number of U.S. agricultural products and will establish higher quotas for imports of beef, poultry and pork. The process will also bind and phase down Russia's domestic agricultural subsidies and will eliminate Russia's export subsidies altogether. And U.S. agricultural businesses, like other American exporters, will also benefit from the more stable and predictable business environment that will come with Russian WTO membership and the ability to enforce WTO rules through WTO dispute settlement.

Baucus, along with his fellow trade leaders in Congress, [has insisted](#) on holding Russia to a [high standard](#) through the WTO accession process to guarantee that American ranchers, farmers, workers and businesses benefit. If Russia does uphold the details of its accession package, the benefits will be one-way, helping to boost the U.S. economy and create jobs here at home across every sector of the economy – services, manufacturing and agriculture included. The U.S. is not required to make any market access concessions to Russia as part of the WTO accession process.

Baucus has long fought for a robust trade agenda that supports American jobs through strong enforcement of our current agreements and an aggressive pursuit of new markets. The Finance Committee has jurisdiction over international trade.

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