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BAUCUS-HATCH BILL STRENGTHENS U.S. CUSTOMS AGENCIES, HELPS BOOST JOB-CREATING TRADE

Finance Leaders' Bill Reauthorizes CBP, ICE with New Tools to Carry out Trade Efforts

WASHINGTON – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) and Ranking Member Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) introduced legislation late Friday to bolster the nation's job-creating trade agenda by strengthening the trade facilitation and enforcement efforts of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

The Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Reauthorization Act of 2013 reauthorizes CBP and ICE and directs them to dedicate resources to customs facilitation and trade enforcement. The bill also establishes new tools and high-level trade positions to bolster the agencies' trade-related efforts.

"Our trade agenda will only deliver the jobs and economic growth we need if the agencies that keep goods moving at our ports have the right tools. In Montana, we've worked hard to make sure Main Street businesses can tap into new markets in Canada – one of our top trading partners," Senator Baucus said. **"This bill helps Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement improve their trade missions by enforcing U.S. customs and trade laws and guaranteeing that safe and legitimate goods can move across our borders."**

"Enhancing Customs and Border Protection's commercial operations, as this bill does, will expand trade and ensure compliance with our customs and trade laws. This legislation also goes a long way to stop pirated and counterfeit products from entering our country that threaten our innovation, our consumers, and our security" said Senator Hatch. **"This is smart, bipartisan policy that will strengthen America's economy and enhance our global competitiveness. I look forward to working with Senator Baucus and my colleagues to advance this common-sense initiative through Congress."**

The Finance Committee leaders' bill supports CBP's trade efforts by devoting a Deputy Commissioner and an Assistant Commissioner of Trade exclusively to trade facilitation and enforcement. It requires CBP and ICE to coordinate with other federal agencies to enforce U.S. trade laws at our borders and prevent unsafe or infringing goods from harming U.S. consumers.

The legislation strengthens trade enforcement by requiring a Joint Strategic Plan to improve CBP and ICE's coordination and provides new tools and resources to target and ensure effective trade enforcement at U.S. ports. The bill also includes provisions of the ENFORCE Act, which passed out of the Finance Committee in July 2012, to provide CBP and the private sector with the tools to combat the evasion of antidumping and countervailing duties.

The legislation also directs CBP to provide commercially significant and measurable trade benefits to participants in voluntary trade programs. This will promote compliance among importers and expedite the flow of legitimate goods across U.S. borders, while allowing CBP to focus its limited resources on shipments that pose the greatest risk to our economy and consumers.

The Senate Finance Committee has jurisdiction over international trade, including the trade missions of CBP and ICE and committee approval of the nominee for CBP Commissioner.

A full summary of the bill is available here.

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