

U.S. Senate Committee on Finance

For Immediate Release

February 8, 2007

SENATORS REMIND KOREAN AMBASSADOR OF BEEF RULES

As new round of trade negotiations approaches, beef-state Senators reiterate that Korea must accept U.S. beef, comply with international guidelines

Washington, DC – U.S. Senators Max Baucus (D-Mont.) and Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) today reminded Korea’s ambassador to the U.S. that Korea’s continued refusal to accept imports of U.S. beef threatens congressional support for a trade agreement between our two countries. Baucus, Grassley and a number of beef-state Senators met with Korean Ambassador Lee Tae-sik on January 17 to deliver that message personally. Senators reiterated their position on Korea’s long-standing ban on U.S. beef in a letter to the Ambassador today, in advance of a new round of trade negotiations between the U.S. and Korea next week.

The Senate Finance Committee has jurisdiction over U.S. trade policy. Baucus and Grassley are the Chairman and Ranking Republican, respectively. The text of the Senators’ letter is below.

February 8, 2007

The Honorable Lee Tae-sik
Embassy of Korea
2450 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Ambassador Lee,

Thank you for meeting with us on January 17, 2007, to discuss beef trade between the United States and Korea. We appreciate your time and willingness to listen to our concerns. Korea has long been a strong political and economic ally, and we look forward to strengthening that relationship.

We have closely followed negotiations for a Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (“KORUS FTA”). These talks hold the promise of new economic opportunities for both of our economies. In the beef sector alone, Korea was the third-largest market for U.S. beef before Korea banned its importation in late 2003. Cattle and beef producers in our states are eager to resume full trade in beef and beef products.

As the next round of KORUS FTA negotiations approaches, we wanted to underscore our concern over Korea’s persistent refusal to open its market to American beef exports. As each of us made clear in our recent meeting, international standards consistently support the safety of U.S. beef regardless

of age and regardless of whether it is boneless, bone-in, or offals. U.S. beef belongs in the Korean market today. Failure to open your market to this safe product will make it difficult for Congress to pass a final KORUS FTA.

Thank you again for your willingness to meet with us. We look forward to working with you to resolve this issue soon.

Sincerely,

Max Baucus
Blanche Lincoln
Pat Roberts
John Thune

Chuck Grassley
Ken Salazar
Ron Wyden

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