



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

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BAUCUS APPLAUDS INITIAL AGREEMENT IN VIETNAM TRADE TALKS

Top Finance Committee Democrat to be at Forefront of Senate Effort on PNTR

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.) today welcomed the conclusion of an “agreement in principle” on trade relations between the United States and Vietnam. This deal paves the way for Congress to vote on granting Vietnam Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) and for Vietnam to join the World Trade Organization (WTO). The United States and Vietnam expect to sign this agreement in the coming weeks.

“The road to normalization between the United States and Vietnam is almost complete,” said Baucus. **“Today’s agreement on Vietnam’s WTO accession paves the way for the final step – Congress’s vote to grant Vietnam Permanent Normal Trade Relations. I intend to push this issue in the Senate and hope we can complete this process before the August recess.”**

PNTR, also known as Most-Favored Nation status, is a pledge of non-discrimination. A grant of PNTR is a promise not to treat imports from one country more harshly than those from another country. Vietnam is currently ineligible for PNTR because it is subject to the provisions of the Jackson-Vanik law, which withholds PNTR from certain Communist or formerly Communist countries. The United States typically terminates a country’s Jackson-Vanik status and grants that country PNTR as part of its accession to the WTO.

“Today’s agreement will further open Vietnam to U.S. products, and is a great accomplishment for Ambassador Portman and his team,” said Baucus. **“The deal requires Vietnam to reduce tariffs on key U.S. goods, including Montana beef. It also provides enhanced access for U.S. companies to enter Vietnam’s increasingly vibrant banking, insurance, telecom, and other services markets.”**

To complete its WTO accession, Vietnam still must satisfy WTO members that its laws and regulations comply with WTO rules. Vietnam hopes to join the 149-member global trade body this year.

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