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STATE OF MAINE

Citizen Trade Policy Commission

August 1, 2012

The Honorable Ronald Kirk
Trade Ambassador
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20508

Ms. Barbara Weisel
Assistant U. S. Trade Representative for Southeast Asia and the Pacific
Office of the United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20508

Re: 2012 Trade Policy Assessment; commissioned by the Maine Citizen Trade Policy Commission

Dear Ambassador Kirk and Ms. Weisel:

As you may know, the Citizen Trade Policy Commission (CTPC) is required by current Maine Law (10 MRSA Chapter 1-A) to provide an ongoing state-level mechanism to assess the impact of international trade policies and agreements on Maine's state and local laws, business environment and working conditions. An important part of the CTPC mandate is to conduct a biennial assessment on the impacts of international trade agreements on Maine.

We have enclosed a copy of our recently completed 2012 Trade Policy Assessment. In a process that is more fully described in an addendum included within the printed document, the Citizen Trade Policy Commission contracted with Professor Robert Stumberg of Georgetown University to conduct this assessment.


We believe that the 2012 Trade Policy Assessment is an invaluable tool for a more complete understanding of both the proposed TransPacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) which is currently being negotiated and other international trade treaties and their current and potential effects on Maine. As a specific result of the 2012 Trade Policy Assessment, the CTPC has voted unanimously to make a number of recommendations regarding the potential treatment of *tobacco* within the TPPA:


- We favor a complete “carve out” of tobacco from the trade provisions of the TPPA; in other words, we would prefer that any regulations or laws pertaining to tobacco be completely excluded from the TPPA. The CTPC believes strongly that the efforts of individual nations to control tobacco and combat its adverse health effects should not be interfered or impeded in any way by provisions of the TPPA or any other international trade agreement;
- Absent a complete “carve out” of tobacco from the TPPA, we favor an approach which modifies the purported compromise proposal being made by the USTR; more specifically, the CTPC favors an approach which ensures that all federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to tobacco regulation are not subject to jurisdiction under the TPPA and further that any tobacco-related provisions of the TPPA embrace an approach which minimizes potential litigation be it through local, state or federal court and the possible use of “investor-state” dispute settlement systems; and
- Finally, the CTPC requests that the USTR develop a clear public statement on the specifics on the specific elements of a tobacco-related provision, as they are proposed by the USTR for consideration as a part of the TPPA.

In making these and other recommendations, members of the CTPC expressed a clear desire to further discuss these subjects in detail with either of you in the context of a public meeting held by the CTPC. We invite you to appear at such a public meeting at a date that is mutually satisfactory and as an alternative to you traveling to Maine, we suggest that a conference call could be arranged on a date to be determined in the near future.

On behalf of the CTPC, we thank you for your attention to the issues we have raised regarding the treatment of tobacco-related provisions in the TPPA and we look forward to discussing these issues with you in more detail.

Sincerely,


Senator Roger Sherman, Chair


Representative Joyce Maker, Chair

c: Governor Paul LePage
 Senator Olympia Snowe
 Senator Susan Collins
 Representative Michael Michaud
 Representative Chellie Pingree
 Maine State Representative Sharon Treat, member of Intergovernmental Policy Advisory Committee