



# Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

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Contact: Carol Guthrie  
202-224-4515

## **BAUCUS WELCOMES LAUNCH OF U.S.-MALAYSIA FREE TRADE TALKS**

*Senator Urges Negotiators to Address Malaysia's Continued Ban on Bone-In Beef*

*Washington, D.C.* - U.S. Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.), Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee, today praised U.S. Trade Representative Robert Portman and Malaysia's International Trade and Industry Minister Rafidah Aziz for launching negotiations for a U.S.-Malaysia Free Trade Agreement. Baucus, a longtime advocate of trade negotiations with significant trading partners such as Malaysia, issued the following statement:

**“It should come as no surprise that the United States is today launching negotiations with Malaysia, and I congratulate Ambassador Portman and Minister Rafidah for doing so. Malaysia is one of those major Asian economies with which I have long urged the Administration to negotiate a free trade agreement. For the United States, Malaysia represents a major commercial player – in the same league as France, Italy, Taiwan, and the Netherlands.**

**“In the past, we have spent too much time, effort, and resources negotiating agreements with small countries of little commercial significance. Not surprisingly, a succession of such agreements – which have little potential to create jobs at home but nevertheless require difficult congressional votes – has led to a diminished appetite for free trade agreements in the Congress.**

**“However, a free trade agreement with Malaysia promises to be very different. Such an agreement has the potential to have a positive effect on the U.S. economy, creating jobs for Americans in sectors ranging from manufacturing to agriculture to services. As a result, members across the political spectrum can be excited about an agreement that will enhance U.S. competitiveness by creating opportunities for U.S. exporters to sell their goods and services in one of the world's major economic markets.**

**“Of course, negotiating this agreement will not be easy. Malaysia retains important obstacles to U.S. trade. For instance, it continues to ban bone-in beef and limits access for U.S. service providers. But that's why we negotiate trade agreements – to break down lingering barriers and develop new market access possibilities for U.S. farmers, ranchers, manufacturers, service providers, and innovators. I look forward to working with Ambassador Portman on crafting an agreement that is as good as it can be for Montana and the United States.”**

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