



For Immediate Release  
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Contact: Carol Guthrie (Baucus)  
Jill Gerber (Grassley)  
(202) 224-4515

## **BAUCUS, GRASSLEY CRITICIZE CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION OVER MISSED DEADLINE**

*Finance leaders question agency's failure to tell Congress what resources are needed to enforce customs laws*

*Washington, DC* – U.S. Senators Max Baucus (D-Mont.) and Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), Chairman and Ranking Republican Member of the Senate Finance Committee, are looking into Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) failure to meet a critical, June 30 deadline to tell Congress what human resources they need to adequately carry out commercial inspections and processing of cargo coming into the U.S. In a letter to CBP Commissioner Ralph Basham, the Senators asked why the agency will miss its deadline to submit a report on its resource needs, and what CBP is doing to submit the required report to the Committee as soon as possible. The agency has had nine months to complete the report mandated by the Security and Accountability For Every (SAFE) Port Act of 2006.

**“Striking a good balance between security and trade facilitation is a key responsibility of Customs and Border Protection,”** said Baucus. **“If Customs and Border Protection can’t even tell Congress what staff it needs to protect the American border and to effectively facilitate trade, then it’s a pretty good bet those jobs aren’t being done as well as they should be. The Finance Committee needs this information to exercise proper oversight of international trade on behalf of the American people. We expect a response in short order.”**

Grassley said, **“I’m very disappointed. In developing the SAFE Port Act, we worked with Customs and Border Protection to come up with a reasonable period of time for the agency to develop a resource allocation model. Now they’re going to miss that deadline. The next important deadline is September 30<sup>th</sup>. That’s when the Secretary of Homeland Security is due to report to the Committee how CBP has conformed to the staffing obligations contained in the Homeland Security Act of 2002. That’s one deadline the Department better not miss.”**

The Finance Committee has jurisdiction over trade issues. The text of the Senators’ letter is below.

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June 28, 2007

Honorable W. Ralph Basham  
Commissioner  
Customs and Border Protection  
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.  
Washington, DC 20229

Dear Commissioner Basham:

We have been informed that you will not meet the statutory deadline of June 30, 2007, to submit to the Committee the Resource Allocation Model (RAM) required by section 403 of the Security and Accountability For Every Port Act of 2006 (SAFE Port Act).

We find this unacceptable. Your agency has had 9 months to complete the RAM, which is more than sufficient time to prepare this critical document. The RAM will describe the optimal staffing levels required to carry out the commercial operations within the agency, including commercial inspection, release of cargo, and the revenue functions described in section 412(b)(2) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002. The RAM will contribute importantly to this Committee's efforts to authorize appropriate resources for the commercial functions performed by your agency.

During your confirmation hearing last year we were impressed with your appreciation of the critical balance between security and trade facilitation functions at the agency. We therefore are quite disappointed by the agency's failure to meet this statutory deadline. It is an indication that the appropriate balance has yet to be achieved. We request that you inform us of the specific reasons why the statutory deadline will not be met, and also what efforts are being taken to submit the RAM to the Committee as soon as possible.

As Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee, we intend to continue vigorous oversight of the commercial functions within your agency. We expect to revisit the issue of appropriate balance between the trade security and trade facilitation functions later this year. In the meantime, we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Max Baucus  
Chairman

Charles E. Grassley  
Ranking Member

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