



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 14, 2012

Contact: Communications Office  
(202) 224-4515

## **BAUCUS HAILS COLOMBIA FTA'S ENTRY INTO FORCE**

*Finance Chair Led Senate Passage of Legislation for Colombia FTA to Boost U.S. exports, Create U.S. Jobs*

**Washington, D.C.** – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus today hailed the U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement's (FTA) entry into force, which will take place tomorrow and eliminate and phase-out Colombian tariffs on American manufactured and agricultural goods. Baucus led the fight urging the Administration to send the job-creating agreement to Congress and last year led the Senate to pass the implementing legislation for the trade agreement with Colombia. The trade agreement with Colombia will boost U.S. exports by more than \$1 billion and help U.S. exporters regain market share that has been lost to countries that have already signed FTAs with Colombia.

**"Colombia is dropping tariffs on our manufactured and agricultural goods, and that means the door is opening for American workers and businesses to grow,"** Baucus said. **"This a major economic win that levels the playing field for American workers and businesses. Colombia's economy is growing quickly, and it's a lucrative market for the world-class products made here in the U.S. This trade deal is worth a billion dollars in new U.S. exports and thousands of new jobs at home, and that's just the kind of boost our economy needs."**

As Finance Committee Chairman, [Baucus championed the Colombia Free Trade agreement](#), along with the Korea and Panama FTAs and Trade Adjustment Assistance, and helped lead the way for their [bipartisan passage in the Senate](#). Baucus also traveled to Colombia last year where he [met with Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos](#) to advance the trade agreement and worked to [boost U.S. exports](#) to Colombia.

More details on the free trade agreement are below:

### **The U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement**

#### ***U.S.-Colombia Trade***

- Among South American countries, Colombia is the third-largest destination for U.S. exports and the second-largest market for U.S. agricultural exports.
- The vast majority of Colombian goods typically receive duty-free treatment in the U.S. market, so the FTA will level the playing field for U.S. exporters by removing Colombia's tariffs on U.S. goods.

***Creating American Jobs and Improving our Economy***

- The FTA means U.S. exporters will be able to regain market share lost to other countries that have signed FTAs with Colombia, including Brazil, Argentina and Canada.
- The FTA will increase U.S. exports by more than \$1 billion each year and increase U.S. GDP by \$2.5 billion, supporting thousands of new jobs here at home.
- More than 80 percent of U.S. exports will immediately gain duty-free access, and the remaining tariffs will be phased out over the next 10 years.
- In addition to boosting manufactured and agricultural exports, the FTA will also provide new access for U.S. service suppliers to Colombia's \$166 billion services market.

### ***Labor Rights***

- The FTA includes the strongest labor provisions of any trade agreement in the world, and Colombia agreed to a Labor Action Plan, which one prominent labor group described as "the most important agenda for the labor movement" since Colombia's 1991 Constitution.
- The FTA requires Colombia to adopt and maintain laws to implement five core labor standards: the right to organize; the right to bargain collectively; prohibitions on forced labor; protections for child labor; and freedom from employment discrimination.
- Colombia has met all of the Action Plan's commitments to date to increase protection of labor activists, enforce core labor rights and reduce impunity for perpetrators of violence against union members.

###