



For Immediate Release
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**BAUCUS DEPARTING ON TRADE MISSION TO COLOMBIA, BRAZIL TO PROMOTE
U.S. EXPORTS, HIGHLIGHT NEED TO MOVE U.S.-COLOMBIA FTA, STRENGTHEN
TRADE RELATIONS**

Finance Chairman to Meet with Top Colombian and Brazilian Officials

Washington, DC – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) will head to Colombia and Brazil tomorrow to meet with senior government officials in both countries to discuss key economic and trade issues, including the pending U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Baucus will be accompanied by agricultural and business leaders from Montana, who will explore new business partnerships and export opportunities in both countries.

“Colombia and Brazil are strategically valuable trading partners for the United States,” said Baucus. **“Finalizing our free trade agreement with Colombia and working with Brazil to expand trade and investment will level the playing field for American exporters and create significant opportunities for U.S. agriculture, manufacturing and services. We have delayed action on the Colombia Free Trade Agreement for too long. Now is the time to resolve outstanding issues and approve the Free Trade Agreement so ranchers, farmers and workers in Montana and across the U.S. can compete. Our trip will help promote Montana’s world-class agriculture and other products to these vital markets and strengthen our trade relationships with Colombia and Brazil.”**

Baucus is scheduled to meet with senior government officials in Colombia to discuss the pending FTA and work to address related issues, including labor issues. Baucus has been a leading advocate of the U.S.-Colombia FTA. American farmers and other exporters are steadily losing market share in Colombia to other countries that have free trade agreements with Colombia. Colombian exporters already enjoy duty-free access to the U.S. market under trade preference programs. The U.S.-Colombia FTA would grant American exporters reciprocal duty-free access to Colombia’s market. Last week, [Baucus urged United States Trade Representative Ron Kirk](#) to act quickly on the Colombia FTA and asked him to identify at a March 9 Finance Committee hearing any additional steps Colombia should take to address outstanding issues and to provide an expeditious timetable for moving the agreement through Congress.

Baucus also plans to tour some of Colombia’s flood-affected areas and discuss the importance of reinstating the Andean Trade Preference Act (ATPA), which expired on February 12. In Brazil, Baucus will meet with senior government leaders to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral trade relations, including by extension of the Generalized System of Preferences, which expired at the end of 2010. The trade mission also will allow Montanan agricultural groups and businesses to learn more about these crucial markets, form partnerships and meet with relevant government agencies.

Baucus has long fought for a robust trade agenda that supports American jobs through strong enforcement of our current agreements and an aggressive pursuit of new markets. The Finance Committee has jurisdiction over international trade.