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BAUCUS, KIRK HIGHLIGHT IMPORTANCE OF LUMBER ENFORCEMENT
IN VISIT TO MONTANA LUMBER MILL
Finance Chairman welcomes USTR's effort on enforcement, calls for sustained "vigilance"

Columbia Falls, Mont. – Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (D-Mont.) led United States Trade Representative Ron Kirk today on a tour of Stoltze Land and Lumber in Columbia Falls, Montana where Baucus showed Kirk first-hand the importance of the lumber industry to Montana's economy. Baucus also thanked Kirk for his past efforts to enforce the 2006 U.S. – Canada Softwood Lumber Agreement, and urged him to continue enforcing the agreement in the future, to ensure that Montana's lumber workers can compete on a level playing field.

"For more than 100 years, the softwood lumber industry has been the lifeblood of Montana," said Baucus. **"Today's tour of the lumber mill was designed to help Ambassador Kirk see, smell, and hear how important this industry is to Montana's economy. Ambassador Kirk has worked hard to enforce the U.S. – Canada Softwood Lumber Agreement in the past year. I hope today's tour will encourage even more vigilant enforcement of the agreement so America's lumber workforce can compete on fair ground."**

The United States and Canada entered into the Softwood Lumber Agreement in 2006 to govern softwood lumber trade between the two countries. In March 2009, an international panel ordered Canada to provide the United States CDN $68.26 million -- approximately U.S. $54.8 million -- in compensation for breaching its obligations under the Agreement. Despite the panel's decision, Canada failed to properly compensate the United States. The United States, led by Ambassador Kirk, swiftly responded by imposing 10 percent ad valorem duties on softwood lumber imports from Canada's eastern provinces. The Softwood Lumber Agreement remains in effect until 2013.

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