

Statement of Demetrios J. Marantis
Nominee for Deputy United States Trade Representative
Before the Senate Committee on Finance
April 30, 2009

Mr. Chairman, Senator Grassley, and Members of this Committee, I am humbled to sit before you as you consider my nomination to be Deputy U.S. Trade Representative. I am honored that President Obama and Ambassador Kirk have selected me for this post.

I have spent the past four years on the other side of the Committee's dais on Senator Baucus's Finance Committee staff. Chairman Baucus, thank you for the opportunity to serve you, this Committee, and the people of Montana. And thank you Senator Grassley for the kindness and support you have shown me. The relationship between the two of you is an example of fairness, trust, and honesty that I hope to replicate throughout my career.

Sitting today at this witness table, I know that the position for which I have been nominated promises to be the greatest challenge of my career. I do not take this challenge lightly. I approach it with humility and dedication. I also approach this challenge with the fifteen years of experience gained from working in international trade in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Yet what I have done in my international trade career is not as important as the lessons I have learned through my years participating in the public policy deliberations of how trade can best serve the American people.

I have learned that good trade policy requires the courage to pursue the tough negotiations that yield the biggest benefits for America's economy, as well as the courage to walk away from a deal that is just not good enough. Good trade policy also requires the creativity to find new tools to open markets and to enforce current agreements so that our country's farmers, manufacturers, ranchers and small businessmen and women can benefit from trade. Good trade policy requires inclusiveness, consulting with all stakeholders, even if we do not ultimately agree.

I have learned that good trade policy requires the tenacity to doggedly pursue unscientific non-tariff barriers to our agriculture exports and the unfair subsidies that undermine America's manufacturers. Good trade policy requires the vision and optimism to realize that small trade agreements and sectoral deals can grow into a bigger regional or global opportunity for our country's exporters. And my experience has taught me that good trade policy can work to the benefit of the poorest countries around the globe as well as to the benefit of the world's economic heavyweights.

Yet the most important lesson I have learned comes from my four plus years working with all of you on the Senate Finance Committee. That lesson is that good trade policy is simply not possible without your support and the support of your colleagues in Congress. And that support depends on recognizing that this Administration's trade policy directly affects the workers, farmers, and ranchers in each of your states and across America.

I do not pretend that winning your support for this Administration's trade policies will be easy. The issues in the jurisdiction of this Committee are never easy. But I have watched all of you –

under the leadership of Senators Baucus and Grassley – try to form one product out of so many different voices. Sometimes it works. Sometimes it doesn't. But what you have taught me is that we cannot hope to make progress on any one issue – not matter how easy or controversial – if we do not try to work through our differences together.

It is these lessons that I hope to take with me to the job of Deputy U.S. Trade Representative. If I am confirmed, I will apply these lessons and build upon them. I will use them to find a way to manage our existing challenges, whether it is our trade and economic relationship with China or the issues associated with our trade agreement with Korea. I pledge to use these lessons to work toward new opportunities, including reform of our trade preference programs for the developing world and tackling the trade and competitiveness issues posed by climate change.

These challenges occur in a time of profound skepticism of international trade and in an environment of historic economic uncertainty and instability. Meeting these challenges is a daunting prospect. But America thrives in adversity when we all work together. And, as history tells us, America's trade policy thrives when we approach it as a common, bipartisan endeavor between the Congress and Administration.

Regardless of where I sit – on the staff bench or at this witness table – the Senate Finance Committee will always be where I came from, and I am grateful for the opportunity. I look forward to building on this experience to continue serving the people of this country with smart trade policy.

Thank you for considering me for the position of Deputy U.S. Trade Representative.