

CITIZEN TRADE POLICY COMMISSION

**Public Hearing
December 4, 2008
Husson College
Libra Lecture Hall
Bangor, ME**

Senator Rotundo welcomed guests and members. Sen. Rotundo described the Commission as a non-partisan commission which was established by the Legislature in May of 2004 to assess and monitor the legal and economic impacts of trade agreements on state and local laws, working conditions and the business environment; to provide a mechanism for citizens and legislators to voice their concerns and recommendations and to make policy recommendations designed to protect Maine's jobs, business environment and laws from any negative impact of trade agreements. The commission consists of 17 voting members representing a broad spectrum of interested parties and five nonvoting members from five state governmental departments.

This hearing is to get input from citizens about how international trade agreements are impacting their lives.

While international trade agreements are negotiated at the federal level, public input can and does have an affect on what happens in Washington.

Congressman Michael Michaud was thanked for attending the hearing, along with Carol Woodcock from Senator Snowe's office and Alison Geagan from Senator Collin's office. Introductions of Commission members were made.

Senator Rotundo advised that the public comment period would remain open for written comments or can be submitted to linda.b.nickerson@maine.gov or to her attention at Bureau of Labor Standards, 45 SHS, Augusta, ME 04333-0045. Individuals were asked to step up to the podium and sign the attendance sheet, clearly state their name, city of residence, affiliation for the record, limit their testimony to ten minutes and asked to speak only once to allow others to speak. Attendees were advised that it was inappropriate to enter into debate or prolonged back and forth discussion during this period. It is not the purpose of the hearing to resolve issues or to answer all questions that may arise, but rather it is the intent to capture all public comments, questions and concerns.

Senator Rotundo opened the hearing for comment.

The following persons presented testimony:

1. Emery Deabay, Bucksport affiliated with the United Steel Workers, supporting the Trade Act bill put forth by Congressman Michaud (submitted written testimony).

2. Bonnie Preston, Blue Hill, member of Alliance for Democracy, supporting the Trade Act bill (submitted written testimony).
3. Terry Whorty, President, Local 12 representing the paper mill industry supporting Congressman Michaud's bill (did not submit written testimony).
4. Jon Falk, Director, Peace through Interamerican Community Action, (PICA), Bangor, (submitted written testimony).
5. Steve Husson, Hampden, works for food and medicine, supporting the Fair Trade Act (submitted written testimony).
6. Alexander Aman, University of Maine, Orono student (did not have written testimony) supported Michaud's trade act.
7. Jamilla El-Shafe, southern Maine, Save Our Water, spoke about the water extraction issues, passed out water bottles, spoke in support (no written testimony).
8. Representative Rick Burns, supporting the Trade Act (no written testimony).
9. Kathleen Caldwell, Brooksville, shared concerns with trade agreements, labor and environmental standards in El Salvador, (submitted written testimony).
10. John Greenman, Old Town, met with residents of Carasque, El Salvadore and explained has many have been adversely affected by trade practices. Mr. Greenman supports the Trade Act and thanked Congressman Michaud. Submitted written testimony.
11. Margaret Baillie, Bangor formerly a garment worker. Ms. Baillie urged the commission and Governor Baldacci to join sweatfree consortiums (submitted written testimony).
12. Noah Dudley, Freedom, represents the Beehive Collective in Machias and member of Maine Atlantica Watch. Expressed concerns of how trade affects ecco systems and generations to come (no written testimony).
13. Liam Burnell, midcoast farmworker, Union and Lincolnville. Supports and thanked Congressman Michaud for submitting his bill (no written testimony).
14. Logan Perkins, works as a farm and food policy coordinator for a small statewide non-profit and is a member of the Fair Trade Coalition and the National Family Farm Coalition. Commented on agriculture and trade issues and expressed concerns for Maine's farmers (no written testimony).
15. Jessie Dowling, Searsmont, works on a farm milking goats and making cheese, is a member of the Maine Atlantica Watch (submitted written testimony).
16. Bill Murphy, Glenburn, Maine and Director of the Bureau of Labor Education, University of Maine. Highlighted how NAFTA has affected not only the paper industries in Maine but other industries in Maine. NAFTA impact on Maine's economy and workers has been devastating. Maine has lost over 24,000 manufacturing jobs. Mr. Murphy commented on Congressman Michaud's legislation and supports the Trade Act. Commended Congressman Michaud for his legislation (submitted written testimony).
17. Dennis Chinoy, Bangor, works with Peace through Interamerican Community Action (PICA). Mr. Chinoy discussed trade policies affecting El Salvador and other Latin America areas. The Fair Trade Act will hardly solve problems of economic hardship in our country or Latin America, but makes it possible for people both north and south can live sustainably in countries they love. He urged state and national officials to support Congressman's legislation (submitted written testimony).
18. Robert Kates, Presidential Professor of Sustainable Science, University of Maine. Geographer by training and Climate Scientist by vocation. Chair of the Nobel Peace Prize and in Maine, Chairs the Science and Economic Resource Panel that helped develop the Maine greenhouse action plan. Trade policy issues affect ability to reduce climate change. Michaud bill addresses some but not all issues, however, supports the Trade bill (submitted written testimony).
19. Daphine Loring, Greene, Coordinator, Maine Fair Trade Campaign (submitted summary of Trade Act).

20. Eric Oder-Fink, co-founder of Justice Clothing, retailer of only union made clothing of United States and Canada. Expressed concerns of being a specialty shop selling clothing that is not made in a sweat shop. They are part of a handful of stores in the world that specializes in this. Supports Michaud's Trade Act (submitted written testimony).
21. Alec Maybarduk, MSEA-SEIU, Local 1989. Supports Michaud's Trade Act (submitted written testimony).
22. Mike Lewis, emailed testimony on to the commission on December 16, 2008.
23. Bjorn Claeson, Bangor, Executive Director, SweatFree Communities. Urged support of the Trade Reform, accountability, development and employment of the Trade Act. SweatFree Communities endorsed the Trade Act (submitted written testimony).
24. Michael Owen, student, University of Maine. Discussed free trade agreements and clarification needed (no written testimony).
25. Martha Spiess submitted a written testimony to the commission on January 2, 2009.
26. Congressman Michael Michaud. Thanked Commission for holding the hearing and patience of everyone listening to testimony. Thanked Commission members for the work that they are doing in Maine and a leader whereas other states are following suit as to what Maine is doing. Was asked to talk about the Trade Act but felt that has already been heavily discussed this evening and the devastation that trade policy has had in Maine and across the country. Has been working diligently on the trade model; has met with President elect transition team on trade which made commitment to them that they will not move forward with any major trade policy change unless they sit down with the trade working group to discuss efforts. Also made it clear that whomever they select as US Trade Representative, they will instruct that individual to get input from them. Congressman Michaud discussed his Trade Act, requirements, issues and how it will affect all. Discussed the Value Added Tax and how the Trade Act will correct this disadvantage to U S businesses. Thanked everyone for all the work they are doing.

Representative Patrick recognized Congressman Michaud and thanked him personally for sponsoring the Trade Act.

27. Brent Hall, resident of Bangor, speaking on behalf of Allan Boulier who could not attend due to sickness. Mr. Hall read the testimony submitted by Allan and Debbie Boulier (submitted written testimony).
28. Will Neils, Appleton, Maine. Expressed dismay of government, politics, union paying jobs, trade, lack of social accountability, and Governor Baldacci. Senator Rotundo interrupted Mr. Neils and advised him to keep his personal comments to himself (no written testimony).
29. Juan Carlos Valencia, student University of Maine, originally from Mexico. Discussed how trade affected his country and his family (no written testimony submitted).

Representatives of Snowe's and Collins office were present but left early and declined the opportunity to speak.

Senator Rotundo thanked everyone for attending. Sarah Komuniecki, from WABI TV5 was in attendance, as well as representatives from WERU 89.9 FM. The hearing adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda B. Nickerson
Secretary
Bureau of Labor Standards