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STATE OF MAINE

Citizen Trade Policy Commission

To: The Honorable Olympia Snowe
United States Senate
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-0001

The Honorable Susan Collins
United States Senate
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Michael Michaud
U. S. House of Representatives
1724 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-1902

The Honorable Chellie Pingree
U. S. House of Representatives
1037 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

From: Senator Troy Jackson, co-chair
Representative Peggy Rotundo, co-chair
Maine Citizen Trade Policy Commission

Date: July 9, 2010

Re: HR 2293/S. 1644, The Public Health Trade Advisory Committee Act

We are writing to ask you to support H.R. 2293/S.1644, the Public Health Trade Advisory Committee Act that was introduced by Reps. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and Lloyd Doggett (D-TX), and Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-MI). The legislation amends the Trade Act of 1974 to add a Public Health Advisory Committee on Trade to the Second Tier of the Federal Trade Advisory Committee System. The provisions of this legislation are consistent with policy positions the Maine Citizen Trade Policy Commission has voted to support over the years.

In general, the Trade Advisory Committee System helps the President develop U.S. trade policy. The system has three tiers with the Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations on the top tier and the Industry Trade Advisory Committees on the lowest tier. The proposed new

Public Health Advisory Committee on Trade will enable public health representatives to work with other advisory committees to express their unique perspectives. Even though global trade agreements significantly affect public health matters from the price of medication to the regulations that protect the safety of our food and water supplies, there is an absence of public health representation on U.S. trade advisory committees. This bill will also pave the way for greater public health representation on the Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations and the Industry Trade Advisory Committees.

We feel this bill will improve the Trade Advisory Committee system in several ways:

1. It would give public health concerns consideration at the onset of trade agreement formation;
2. It would require greater openness and transparency in the way all of the trade advisory committees operate. The changes would involve more timely communications among committees, Congress and the Administration, and hold the Administration accountable for responding to committees' concerns; and
3. It would be the first Trade Advisory Committee to be exclusively composed of nongovernmental organizations to provide a more thorough and effective representation of public interests.

Thank you for attention to this matter and we hope you will support this piece of legislation.