

Citizen Trade Policy Commission

Friday, June 24, 2005

State House, Room 126, Augusta

Meeting Summary

Members present: Rep. John Patrick (co-chair), Sen. Bruce Bryant, Rep. Roderick Carr, Rep. Deborah Hutton, Matt Schlobohm, Bjorn Claeson, Jim Dusch, Cynthia Phinney, Richard Coyle, Mary Ellen Johnston, Elizabeth Wyman, Vanessa Santarelli, Carla Dickstein, Peter Connell, Dr. Robert Weiss.

Members absent: Sen. Margaret Rotundo (co-chair), Sen. Kevin Raye, Paul Volckhausen, Barbara Van Burgel, Mark Haggerty, James Wilfong.

Staff present: Nicole Dube, Legislative Analyst

I. Introductions

Rep. Patrick convened the Commission meeting and asked Commission members to introduce themselves.

II. Commission Work Session

Staffing

The Commission discussed its staffing needs and voted unanimously to direct the Chairs, in consultation with staff, to develop a written policy establishing procedures and guidelines for the utilization of Commission staff during the legislative session.

Annual Report and Assessment Requirements

The Commission received a report back from the Assessment Subcommittee indicating that they are still in the process of working with the three other subcommittees (Healthcare Subcommittee, Business, Labor and Economic Development Subcommittee and Environment and Natural Resources Subcommittee) to develop the form and subject matter of the annual assessment. The subcommittees agreed to send draft assessments to staff before the next Commission meeting and the Commission directed staff to provide a draft report and assessment for the Commission to review at its next meeting. The Commission also agreed to ask the Forum on Democracy and Trade to review the draft subcommittee assessments in order to provide technical assistance.

USTR State Request on GATS

The Commission discussed its May 27th letter to USTR in response to a May 3rd USTR memo to the State Points of Contact (SPOCs) and the Intergovernmental Policy Advisory Committee (IGPAC) asking for comments regarding ongoing negotiations at the World Trade Organization

(WTO) on the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). The response from the Commission asked that USTR carve out Maine state and local government actions from the new GATS offer until the Commission has had an opportunity to adequately review and analyze the language of the proposed commitment. The Commission did not receive a response from USTR. The Commission members present voted unanimously to send a letter to the Congressional delegation asking for assistance obtaining a response from USTR in order to strengthen and clarify the system for communicating with USTR in future. Commission member Liz Wyman agreed to draft the letter and staff agreed to follow up with the Congressional delegation.

Scheduling the Next Commission Meeting

The Commission agreed to hold its next meeting on July 22nd in order to review and vote on its annual report and assessment and directed staff to confirm that a quorum will be present. The Commission decided not to meet in August due to its inability to secure a quorum. The Commission also agreed to extend another invitation to USTR to attend its September meeting. Commission member Richard Coyle agreed to check USTR's availability in September.

III. Sub-committee Work Session

The Commission broke into its three subcommittees (healthcare, environment/natural resources and labor/economic development) to continue to work on the Commission's annual assessment. The full Commission then reconvened and each subcommittee briefed the Commission on its work.

IV. Adjournment.

The Commission adjourned its meeting at approximately 3:00PM