



Maine Fair Trade Campaign

*Working together for fair trade
and a just, sustainable and democratic
global economy*

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Michaud Introduces TRADE Act of 2009

Maine Congressman announces landmark trade reform legislation

Bill co-sponsored by Pingree, Snowe considering co-sponsorship in Senate

Maine's 2nd district Congressman introduced major trade reform policy legislation in Washington, D.C today. Co-sponsored by 106 members of the House of Representatives, Rep. Mike Michaud's bill The TRADE Act is set to be the leading platform for redirecting failed U.S. trade policy.

The TRADE Act, endorsed by labor, environmental, family farm, human rights, and faith groups in Maine and across the country, lays out a process for reviewing existing trade agreements like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). It sets standards for what must be in all future trade agreements, such as enforceable labor and environmental standards and food and product safety standards. It spells out what must not be in future trade deals, like investor provisions that undermine state sovereignty and bad agricultural provisions that have destroyed the livelihoods of small farmers.

Maine has been hit particularly hard by free trade. For years, Mainers have been trying to stop expansion of bad trade policies like NAFTA and working to put forward solutions to fix the broken system.

Representative Chellie Pingree of Maine's first district is among the 106 original co-sponsors, and Senator Olympia Snowe is seriously considering co-sponsoring the Senate version of the bill with Senator Sherrod Brown (OH).

"The TRADE Act is the major overhaul we need to set trade policy on a new course," said Sarah Bigney, organizer of the Maine Fair Trade Campaign. "Workers rights, small farms, jobs, the environment, and state sovereignty have been undermined by corporate free trade policy for too long. Maine is ready for a new way forward for fair trade."

Maine has been a leader on trade reform, being the first state to pass legislation forming an official body to monitor the impact of trade agreements, the Maine Citizen Trade Policy Commission.

Members of the Maine Fair Trade Campaign, a statewide coalition that endorsed The TRADE Act, were on hand today in Washington D.C. Stephan Donnell, President of United Steelworkers 1188 from the Bucksport Verso paper mill, said that "Workers in Maine have been waiting for a bill like this for years. It's time for fair trade, not just free trade. We believe the TRADE Act will make a real difference for workers in Bucksport and across our state."

The TRADE Act is a result of years of public pressure for change. "The 2008 election sent a clear message from the public to D.C. that our country is sick of the failed NAFTA model and

demands a new vision for trade agreements,” said Bigney. “President Obama pledged on his campaign to reform trade, and across the country fair trade candidates unseated NAFTA supporters. The TRADE Act is in response to the public demand that Congress set a new course on trade.”

Groups across Maine are rallying behind Michaud’s bill. “Passing the TRADE Act will have significant positive implications for the environment by setting standards for accountability and enforcement,” said Sandy Amborn of the Maine Chapter of the Sierra Club, a coalition member of the Maine Fair Trade Campaign. “The TRADE Act will prevent further degradation of our resources and habitats across the world while still promoting global economic prosperity,” Amborn said.

A diverse coalition of civil society groups support the TRADE Act, including labor, environmental, faith, family farm, and consumer groups. Matthew Beck, organizer with IBEW 1837, has been following the TRADE Act since it was first drafted. “The TRADE Act will help all workers- here in Maine and around the world- have a foot up in the global economy. Free trade policy has created a race to the bottom for labor and environmental standards, and its time to change directions to make trade beneficial for working people, their families, and their communities.”

Michaud is the foremost leader on trade in the U.S. House of Representatives and is Chair of the House Trade Working Group.

*Spokespeople from the Maine Fair Trade Campaign coalition are available for comment.
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