

Sen. Troy Jackson, Chair
Sen. John Patrick
Sen. Roger Sherman
Rep. Sharon Treat, Chair
Rep. Jeff McCabe
Rep. Bernard Ayotte

Robert Umphrey
Stephen Cole
Michael Herz
Dr. Joel Kase



John Palmer
Linda Pistner
Harry Ricker
Jay Wadleigh

Ex-Officio
Mike Karagiannes
Wade Merritt
Pamela Taylor

Staff:
Lock Kiermaier

STATE OF MAINE

Citizen Trade Policy Commission

PRESS RELEASE:
PUBLIC HEARING ON FOOD SAFETY AND AGRICULTURE TO BE HELD
ON DECEMBER 12th BY
THE CITIZEN TRADE POLICY COMMISSION

The Chairs of the Citizen Trade Policy Commission (CTPC), Senator Troy Jackson and Representative Sharon Anglin Treat, are inviting members of the public to attend a public hearing which is scheduled for Thursday, December 12th from 4 PM to 8 PM at the UMS Hutchinson Center (Rt. 3) in Belfast.

The CTPC anticipates that the public hearing will broadly focus on the topics of food and seafood safety, specific impacts on Maine agriculture and such food policy issues such as buying local and GMO and other food labeling policies as they pertain to the TransPacific Partnership Agreement (TPP). The TPP involves at least 12 Pacific Rim nations and is anticipated to be finalized in 2014. During recently scheduled meetings, the CTPC has devoted considerable time to discussing this potential Free Trade Agreement with a focus on the treatment of food safety issues and President Obama's current "fast track" proposal to have this treaty be approved by Congress on a simple up or down vote.

In commenting upon the importance of the CTPC public hearing, CTPC Chair Senator Troy Jackson stated that "As Co-Chair of the Citizen Trade Policy Commission, I believe it is our responsibility to help inform members of the Maine public about the critical issues concerning food and seafood safety that are currently being negotiated in the TPP. From an equally critical perspective, it is crucial that the commission hears from the public about their perspective on these important issues. The upcoming public hearing provides the perfect opportunity for this mutual exchange of information and viewpoints."

CTPC Chair Representative Sharon Anglin Treat also stated that "The U.S. government is negotiating two sweeping trade agreements that, if completed as envisioned, will bind most of the countries in the world as well as US state and local governments. These

agreements extend well beyond traditional trade topics and have implications for our policies on food safety, labeling of products, public health and much more. We invite the public to attend this hearing both to learn more about these trade agreements, and to offer testimony about how the TPPA and EU-US trade deals could affect Maine. Testimony on any issue is welcome, and we particularly seek information about how these treaties may affect Maine's seafood and agricultural businesses and our policies promoting locally-grown food."

Another member of the CTPC, Stephen Cole, Energy & Environment Officer for CEI, a Maine based nonprofit economic development organization, emphasized that "International trade policy often represents the interests of multi-national corporations. The CTPC is a steadfast voice for the rights and needs of Maine companies and their workers." CTPC member Robert Umphrey, President of Northeast Packaging Company in Presque Isle, commented that "The role of the CTPC is highly critical at this time in addressing the interests of Maine in the ongoing TPP negotiations. In addition, Maine must be assured that the states exporting sectors such as services, manufacturing and agriculture have adequate market access provisions with all signatories. Maine's traditional manufacturers have not always fared well in prior trade agreements and the TPP should be closely examined to determine what is in the state's best interests."

The CTPC expects testimony from a number of prominent governmental, academic and private sources including Maine Congresswoman Chellie Pingree; Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (Connecticut), the Maine Farm Bureau; the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, Food & Water Watch and welcomes other testimony from members of the public. More information about the public hearing can be obtained by e-mailing the CTPC at ctpc@legislature.maine.gov.

The CTPC was created by Maine State law in 2003 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 CTPC is composed of 6 legislators, 7 members from the private sector and 5 representatives of different state agencies.

CONTACTS:

- Senator Troy Jackson, CTPC Chair: phone 436-0763
- Representative Sharon Anglin Treat, CTPC Chair: phone 242-8558
- Lock Kiermaier, CTPC Staff: phone 446-0651