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STATE OF MAINE

Citizen Trade Policy Commission

PRESS RELEASE: **PUBLIC HEARING TO BE HELD ON SEPTEMBER 19TH 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, September 19th at 5 PM in Room 214 of the Cross Office Building in Augusta.

The CTPC anticipates that the Public Hearing will broadly focus on two international trade treaties that are currently being negotiated. The TransPacific Partnership Agreement (TPP) involves at least 12 Pacific Rim nations and is anticipated to be finalized in 2014. The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) is currently being negotiated between the United States and member nations of the European Union and has an expedited timetable for final agreement in 2014. During recently scheduled meetings, the CTPC has devoted considerable time to discussing these two potential Free Trade Agreements with a focus on the use of tariffs on footwear in the TPP, the treatment of existing national tobacco health measures, the treatment of chemicals and the environment as they relate to public health and safety, the treatment of food safety issues and President Obama's current "fast track" proposal to have both treaties 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 of trade policy that are currently being negotiated in several international trade treaties. 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

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this mutual exchange of information and viewpoints." CTPC Chair Representative Sharon Anglin Treat also stated that "Trade policy is about a lot more than opening doors to export Maine goods- though that's very important. These treaties also include provisions that could change the rules about how Maine regulates toxics in consumer products, enforces tobacco prevention policies, or negotiates prescription drug rebates in Medicaid. Free trade agreements can bring job losses as well as gains, and the Commission is interested in hearing from the public about how they will be affected by pending agreements."

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. Maine businesses and citizens should be cognizant of proposed tariff reductions that may affect Maine's manufacturers, with serious consequences as in the case of New Balance. 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 Norah Todd, Legislative Director for Congressman Michael Michaud; Professor Robert Stumberg, Harrison Institute for Public Law, Georgetown University; William Waren, Trade Policy Analyst, Friends of the Earth, U.S.; Maine AFL-CIO; Maine Fair Trade Campaign; Alliance for American Manufacturing, the Environmental Health Strategy Center 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.

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