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STATE OF MAINE

## Citizen Trade Policy Commission

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**PRESS RELEASE:  
PUBLIC HEARING ON  
TRADE POLICY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO MAINE AGRICULTURE  
AND OTHER TRADE TOPICS  
TO BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 20, 2014 BY  
THE CITIZEN TRADE POLICY COMMISSION AND THE  
JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND  
FORESTRY**

Maine's Citizen Trade Policy Commission (CTPC) will be holding a public hearing with the Legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Conservation on Thursday, November 20, 2014 at the University of Maine at Farmington at 6:30 PM in Room 101 of the Roberts Learning Center.

The primary focus of this public hearing is to gather public comment and testimony regarding agricultural trade topics that are important to Maine and in particular, that may be subject to the provisions of two trade agreements now under negotiation: the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). In addition, the CTPC welcomes testimony on other trade-related topics, including proposals for Trade Promotion Authority (known as "Fast Track") that are currently pending in Congress.

Earlier this year, the CTPC conducted its biennial assessment of trade impacts on Maine. For the 2104 Assessment, the CTPC contracted with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy and the Maine Farmland Trust to produce an assessment which was titled "Maine Agriculture and Food Systems in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership". This document can be read in its entirety at the CTPC website:

<http://legislature.maine.gov/legis/opla/2014FinalAssessment.pdf>

The 2104 Assessment focuses on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) which is currently being negotiated between the United States and the member nations of the European Union (EU) and examines a number of agricultural issues that are being negotiated that could have a significant impact on the vitality of agriculture in Maine. These issues include:

Citizen Trade Policy Commission  
c/o Office of Policy & Legal Analysis  
State House Station #13, Augusta, ME 04333-0013 Telephone: 207 287-1670  
<http://www.maine.gov/legis/opla/citpol.htm>

- Standards regarding *food safety* that could be imposed on Maine that would supersede any state and municipal laws or regulations;
- Opening up *state and local procurement food-related programs* to bids from international companies and negatively impacting the support of Buy Local programs;
- The establishment of certain *Geographical Indications* which provide legal protections for products based on their place of origin, specific production techniques, and the reputation of quality for those goods. The CTPC is specifically seeking testimony concerning food products that are uniquely associated with Maine such as Maine Lobster and Wild Maine Blueberries, and whether we should advise the U.S. Trade Representative to include these or other products as protected Geographical Indications in the TTIP or other trade agreement;
- Provisions in the TTIP could disrupt *Federal Price Supports for Milk* and override the delicate balance currently achieved by the *Maine Dairy Stabilization program*.

Many of these issues are also relevant to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a trade agreement under negotiation among 12 Pacific Rim nations. Recent news reports have indicated that agreement on final TPP text may be imminent, and that this agreement could be sent to Congress for approval in 2015.

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 agriculture that are currently being negotiated in the TTIP. From an equally critical perspective, it is crucial that the commission hears from the public about its 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, one with the European Union and one with Pacific Rim countries including Vietnam, Malaysia, and Japan. If completed as envisioned, these agreements will bind US state and local governments and could affect the viability of Maine's remaining shoe industry, the state's policies on agriculture, food procurement and milk pricing, the cost of prescription drugs, and even the effectiveness of Maine's policies designed to reduce youth smoking. We invite the public to attend this hearing to learn more about these trade agreements, to react to the 2014 Assessment which has been conducted by a joint effort of national and state experts on agricultural trade policy, and to offer testimony about trade policy in general."

The CTPC and the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry expect testimony from a number of prominent governmental, academic and private sources 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](mailto: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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