

Citizen Trade Policy Commission

Tuesday, December 16, 2004

State House, Room 127, Augusta

Meeting Summary

Members present: Sen. Margaret Rotundo (co-chair), Rep. John Patrick (co-chair), Sen. Bruce Bryant, Rep. Roderick Carr, Rep. Deborah Hutton, Matt Schlobohm, Paul Volckhausen, James Wilfong, Dr. Robert Weiss, Bjorn Claeson, Cynthia Phinney, Elizabeth Wyman, Mary Ellen Johnston, Vanessa Santarelli, Paul Chartrand, Richard Coyle, Carla Dickstein

Members absent: Barbara Van Burgel, Jim Dusch, Mark Haggerty

Staff present: Curtis Bentley, Legislative Analyst and Nicole Dube, Legislative Analyst

I. Introductions

Sen. Rotundo convened the Commission meeting and asked Commission members to introduce themselves and make introductory remarks.

II. Review of letters to Maine's congressional delegation

Commission members reviewed a draft letter prepared by staff to Maine's congressional delegation introducing the Commission and expressing a desire to work cooperatively with them to address Maine's needs relating to existing and developing international trade agreements. The Commission approved the draft letter with the addition of a clarifying reference to officers of the State, a list of Commission members and requested that a copy of the letter be sent to Robert Zollick at the Offices of the United States Trade Representative.

III. Public Hearing in Bangor The Commission discussed the upcoming public hearing on February 3, 2005, at the Husson Business College from 7-9 PM in Bangor. The Commission determined that the purpose of the public hearing would be to inform the public about the Commission and its goals and to receive input to guide the Commission's work especially on the upcoming negotiations on CAFTA.

IV. Press release and letters to the editor The Commission asked staff to put together a press release providing notice of the Bangor meeting and highlighting the work of the Commission. Commission members suggested that the chairs and other members write letters to the editor to publicize the Bangor public meeting and the work of the Commission.

V. Central American Free Trade Agreement The Commission directed staff to contact the Forum on Democracy to arrange a presentation on the Central American Free Trade Agreement. Commission members agreed to generate a list of concerns about CAFTA and send them to the USTR and Maine's congressional delegation.

VI. Draft Legislation In response to the draft legislation circulated in preparation for this meeting, Richard Coyle, Executive Director of the Maine International Trade Center and

Commission member, briefed the Commission on the Center and how the Commission and the Center may work together on international trade agreements.

Mr. Coyle reviewed letters from the Board of the Maine International Trade Center and Commissioner Jack Cashman of the Department of Economic and Community Development, which were addressed to the Citizen Trade Policy Commission. Mr. Coyle indicated that legislation of any kind was premature at this juncture because the work of the Commission is still in its early stages.

Senator Bryant requested that Richard Coyle provide information about requests received by the Center from people who had experienced problems involving trade agreements. Representative Hutton asked Mr. Coyle to provide information on who are the single points of contact for each state with the United States Trade Representative. Commission members agreed to focus any draft legislation on the democracy side of free trade, and not just on the business side or the export/import aspect of free trade, which is the primary focus of the Center. The Commission members agreed to put in a legislative place holder for any draft legislation for the 122nd legislature. The Committee agreed to form another subcommittee to work on draft legislation for the Commission's next meeting. Jim Dusch agreed to be point person for this subcommittee.

VI. Commission's work plan and sub-committees Senator Rotundo indicated that most work of the Commission would be done in subcommittees. Commission members agreed that subcommittees would meet to conduct their business after the regular meetings of the Commission and after public hearings, when possible. The commission then broke out into the three subcommittees to review work plans and provide a framework for the direction of the Commission. The full Commission then reconvened and each subcommittee briefed the Commission on its plans.

VII. Adjournment

The Commission meeting was adjourned at 1:30 pm.