

U.S. SENATOR

MAX BAUCUS

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Baucus Announces Opposition to GATT Bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Senator Max Baucus (D-MT) today announced that he will vote against the GATT implementing bill when it comes before the Senate this week. Senator Baucus made the following statement:

"I have decided to vote against the GATT agreement when it comes before the Senate this Thursday.

"Much of it is good. I think that with this bill, the economic growth rate of the United States will rise, we will create some additional jobs and we will see benefits in other areas like intellectual property protection and service exports.

"But this bill also contains some serious problems.

-- First, I do not believe the World Trade Organization is well conceived. The timber subsidy decisions in the Canadian agreement show that dispute settlement is a real problem and -- because we have no veto -- may be an infringement on the right of due process. Other problems may show up as time goes by, because the WTO has not been studied and debated thoroughly enough.

-- Second, the one-country one-vote system sticks in my craw In the WTO, as in the GATT today, we will be simply one of 125 countries. We are the world's largest economy, largest importer and largest exporter. The WTO voting system should reflect that.

-- And third, too many people in government and business approach this and other trade agreements as ends in themselves. The goal of trade agreements should be to raise the standard of living, make jobs more secure and help middle-class families. We have to spend more time thinking about how to achieve that goal in trade and every other issue.

"Therefore, with regret, I have decided to vote against this bill. I believe we should reject it for now, improve the agreement and come back to it next year.