

Maine Citizen Trade Policy Commission



Senator Margaret Rotundo, Co-Chair

Representative John Patrick, Co-Chair

MEMORANDUM

May 27, 2005

Mr. Christopher A. Padilla
Assistant U.S Trade Representative
For Intergovernmental Affairs and Public Liaison
1724 F. Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Mr. Padilla:

We are writing regarding your May 3, 2005 memo to the State Points of Contact (SPOCs) and the Intergovernmental Policy Advisory Committee (IGPAC) asking for comments regarding ongoing negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO) on the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). A copy of this memo was recently shared with us by our SPOC.

This memo raises several concerns for us, both in terms of the process used to consult with the State of Maine and the substance of the WTO GATS negotiations.

While our SPOC made your request available via the Maine International Trade Center website, we are concerned that the timeframe to consult with the necessary parties is unreasonably short. As representatives of our state have communicated to your office in the past, our current practice is to make decisions regarding whether or not to bind state laws to the rules of international trade agreements with the input of representatives from multiple branches of government, as well as the public. We are also concerned that we need more information to adequately evaluate your request.

We ask that the USTR provide Governor Baldacci and members of the Maine Citizen Trade Policy Commission with the proposed schedule of commitments as it would appear in the agreement - including which modes of delivery are proposed to be bound in which service sector, and to what specific levels of commitment. As we cannot make an informed decision with the information and timeline given, we also request that the USTR carve out all Maine state and local government actions from the new GATS offer slated to be tabled by May 31, 2005 until such time as we have the opportunity to review and analyze the language of the proposed commitments.

Thank you in anticipation for your timely response. We look forward to working with you to resolve our concerns in a timeframe relevant to the current negotiations.

Sincerely,

Senator Margaret Rotundo
Co-Chair

Representative John Patrick
Co-Chair

cc: Governor John E. Baldacci
Alan Stearns, Senior Policy Advisor to Governor Baldacci
Members, Citizen Trade Policy Commission