

ADVISORY

FROM THE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRADE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chairman Levin Announces Hearing on Trade Advisory Committee System

House Ways and Means Committee Trade Subcommittee Chairman Sander M. Levin today announced that the Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Trade will hold a hearing on how the system of trade advisory committees is functioning, and on how to increase transparency and public participation in the development of U.S. trade policy. **The hearing will take place on Thursday, June 25, 2009, in Room B-318, Rayburn House Office Building, beginning at 1:30 p.m.**

In view of the limited time available to hear witnesses, oral testimony at this hearing will be from invited witnesses only. However, any individual or organization not scheduled for an oral appearance may submit a written statement for consideration by the Subcommittee and for inclusion in the printed record of the hearing. A list of invited witnesses will follow.

FOCUS OF THE HEARING:

The hearing will examine the development of trade policy from several perspectives. The Subcommittee will ask the Administration to discuss its recently-initiated policy review and consultations concerning the trade advisory committees. The Subcommittee is interested to hear from stakeholders whether administrative or statutory changes, building on revisions implemented in recent years, might broaden the range of views represented and permit the advisory committees to provide more timely and useful recommendations. Finally, the Subcommittee is requesting testimony on steps that could be taken to encourage public outreach and promote greater public engagement in U.S. trade policy.

BACKGROUND:

Established under the Trade Act of 1974, the trade advisory committee system is intended to provide a formal mechanism through which U.S. trade negotiators receive information and advice from the private sector with respect to U.S. negotiating positions before and during trade negotiations. The system is arranged in three tiers: the President's Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations (ACTPN), five policy advisory committees dealing with

environment, labor, agriculture, Africa, and intergovernmental issues, and 22 technical advisory committees in the areas of industry and agriculture. The trade advisory committees have participated in the formulation of policy for all trade negotiations and provided advice to the Executive and Congress on concluded trade agreements prior to implementation.

Since 1974, the scope of U.S. trade agreements has expanded beyond tariffs and other “border” measures to encompass subjects such as intellectual property rights, food and product safety, environmental regulations and labor rights. The subcommittee will consider the extent to which environmental, labor, public health, development, and civil society stakeholder perspectives are or should be represented on the advisory committees. In the context of the Trade Act’s requirement that advisory committee representation should be “balanced” or “representative”, is it appropriate either to establish separate advisory committees devoted to these concerns or to ensure that existing advisory committees include such stakeholders?

In announcing the hearing, Chairman Levin said, **“The new Administration is committed, and properly so, to making sure our international trade discussion is open to new perspectives. Now is a good time to look at how the trade advisory committees can be part of developing better trade policies.”**

DETAILS FOR SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN COMMENTS:

Please Note: Any person(s) and/or organization(s) wishing to submit for the hearing record must follow the appropriate link on the hearing page of the Committee website and complete the informational forms. From the Committee homepage, <http://waysandmeans.house.gov>, select "Committee Hearings". Select the hearing for which you would like to submit, and click on the link entitled, "Click here to provide a submission for the record." Once you have followed the online instructions, complete all informational forms and click "submit" on the final page. **ATTACH** your submission as a Word or WordPerfect document, in compliance with the formatting requirements listed below, by close of business **Thursday, July 9, 2009**. Finally, please note that due to the change in House mail policy, the U.S. Capitol Police will refuse sealed-package deliveries to all House Office Buildings. For questions, or if you encounter technical problems, please call (202) 225-1721.

FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS:

The Committee relies on electronic submissions for printing the official hearing record. As always, submissions will be included in the record according to the discretion of the Committee. The Committee will not alter the content of your submission, but we reserve the right to format it according to our guidelines. Any submission provided to the Committee by a witness, any supplementary materials submitted for the printed record, and any written comments in response to a request for written comments must conform to the guidelines listed below. Any submission or supplementary item not in compliance with these guidelines will not be printed, but will be maintained in the Committee files for review and use by the Committee.

1. All submissions and supplementary materials must be provided in Word or WordPerfect format and **MUST NOT** exceed a total of 10 pages, including attachments. Witnesses and submitters are advised that the Committee relies on electronic submissions for printing the official hearing record.

2. Copies of whole documents submitted as exhibit material will not be accepted for printing. Instead, exhibit material should be referenced and quoted or paraphrased. All exhibit material not meeting these specifications will be maintained in the Committee files for review and use by the Committee.

3. All submissions must include a list of all clients, persons, and/or organizations on whose behalf the witness appears. A supplemental sheet must accompany each submission listing the name, company, address, telephone, and fax numbers of each witness.

The Committee seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202-225-1721 or 202-226-3411 TTD/TTY in advance of the event (four business days notice is requested). Questions with regard to special accommodation needs in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats) may be directed to the Committee as noted above.

Note: All Committee advisories and news releases are available on the World Wide Web at <http://waysandmeans.house.gov>.