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MEMORANDUM

To: Reporters and Editors  
Re: WTO talks  
Da: Tuesday, July 29, 2008

Sen. Chuck Grassley, ranking member of the Committee on Finance, which is responsible for trade policy, made the following comments on his weekly call with farm broadcasters. Instructions for listening to the comments follow.

“I know Ambassador Schwab and her team are working hard, but the cynic in me remains concerned that this Administration may be willing to cut a deal that doesn't do enough to open up foreign markets to U.S. exports. The proposal that was tabled last week raises concerns, primarily because after seven years of negotiating, we still don't see sufficient improvements in market access for U.S. agricultural products, manufactured goods, and services.

“An agreement that does not meet that standard will not pass the Congress. It's as simple as that. And if that's not achievable, then our negotiators should pack their bags and come home. At this point, what's on the table doesn't look promising.

“It's my understanding that since the most recent framework was tabled, India and China have spent considerable time trying to pull back even further from the ambiguous level of ambition presented in the most recent proposal.

“It's a bad sign if the negotiations are spent debating whether special safeguards should allow advanced developing countries to exceed their commitments under the last multilateral trade agreement, which was the Uruguay Round, and in the case of China, the commitments that China already made to join the World Trade Organization. That's a nonstarter as far as I'm concerned. Instead of negotiating more exceptions to tariff reductions, we should be focusing on realizing meaningful new trade flows. That's where the promise of increasing economic development lies.”

To access the comments, call 1-800-545-1267. Dial 500, then 1.

Voice mail box prompts:

Enter 6.....Advance audio ten seconds.

Enter 4.....Back-up audio ten seconds.  
Enter 3.....Advance audio one minute.  
Enter 1.....Back-up audio one minute.

Or go to <http://grassley.senate.gov>. Click on News, then Radio Actualities.