

United States Senate Committee on Finance

Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa, Chairman

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Grassley: Congress Would Reject Current WTO Draft

HONG KONG -- Sen. Chuck Grassley, chairman of the U.S. Senate Finance Committee, the Senate committee with legislative and oversight jurisdiction over international trade, made the following statement on the draft ministerial declaration circulated at the World Trade Organization Ministerial this afternoon. The draft ministerial declaration is expected to be the subject of lengthy discussions and possible revisions -- maybe even around the clock -- as the ministerial enters its final day.

“Now that I’ve had more time to absorb the text, I’m very disappointed. The text moves us no closer to resolving the impasse on market access that’s really at the heart of development. At the same time, the text calls for more concessions from developed countries with few, if any, commitments from the developing world. I seriously doubt that any agreement with this imbalance will be acceptable to the U.S. Congress or fulfill the negotiating objectives of Trade Promotion Authority. I hope our friends who are pushing for continued concessions from the developed countries without offering anything in return realize that none of this will come about without a give-and-take from all WTO members. For a final agreement, all countries have to contribute, or there just won’t be a Doha Round agreement to implement.”

(Background: Under the U.S. system, the President negotiates trade agreements but the Congress must pass legislation implementing those trade agreements, so approval by the Congress is necessary for the United States to implement trade agreements such as a Doha Round agreement. The Congress also is responsible for legislation granting Trade Promotion Authority to the President. Trade Promotion Authority significantly expedites the United States' ability to negotiate and implement trade agreements. A longtime outspoken advocate for American agriculture and free trade, Chairman Grassley farms corn and soybeans with his son in Butler County, Iowa.)