

October 16, 2002

The Honorable Max Baucus  
Chairman  
Committee on Finance  
United States Senate  
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Attn: Ted Posner

Re: Reconfigured Entry and Protest Language: Miscellaneous Trade Bill

Dear Chairman Baucus:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations and their members, we urge that you add certain non-controversial technical language to streamline and clarify customs entry and administrative review procedures, referred to as "reconfigured entry and protest language," to the miscellaneous trade bill, H.R. 5385. This language has been provided to House Ways and Means and Senate Finance committee staff members.

The private sector and the Customs Service are partnering in the Customs Modernization Project, a massive effort to revamp how customs business is conducted and to enhance border security. The Project, which includes the design of the Automated Commercial Environment (ACE), is well underway and includes the re-engineering of many current customs business practices. The law must be changed to provide the legal foundation for those changed practices. Because Customs is right now in the process of documenting the business requirements that will be the basis for the development of the automation necessary to support these new processes, it is imperative that this legislation passes as quickly as possible. Customs and industry representatives have expressly agreed, within the auspices of the ACE Trade Support Network, that the proposed language is necessary to effectuate the above described changes.

Our future plans are contingent on the re-engineered customs business processes and automation that will enable Customs to meet the challenge to achieve both safe and efficient trade by minimizing the risks to national security and speeding the flow of legitimate goods. We urge that you take appropriate steps to include these critical technical changes to customs entry and administrative review procedures.

Respectfully:

American Association of Exporters and Importers  
Joint Industry Group  
National Customs Brokers & Forwarders  
Association of America  
U.S. Business Alliance for Customs Modernization

cc: The Honorable Charles Grassley  
The Honorable William Thomas  
The Honorable Charles Rangel