

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

December 2, 2008

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Since the WTO Doha Round was launched in 2001, we have supported the administration's efforts to achieve a balanced outcome that would provide meaningful new market access for U.S. agricultural products and industrial goods and services, particularly from developed and key emerging markets. Unfortunately, the negotiating texts currently on the table would provide little if any new market access for U.S. goods, and important advanced developing countries are demanding even further concessions from the United States.

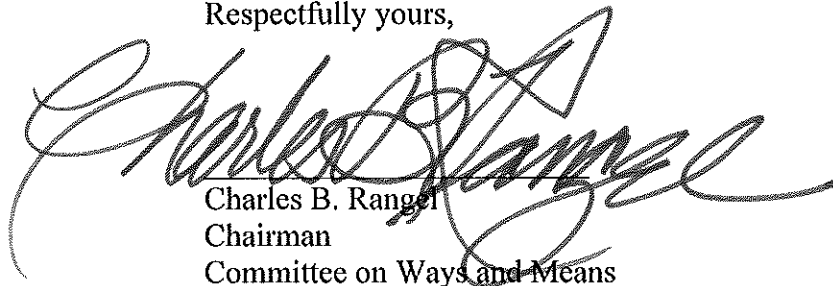
While we applaud the work of world leaders at the G-20 summit and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum to address the current financial crisis and to renew commitment to the Doha Round negotiations, we unfortunately have not yet seen this sentiment translate into negotiating progress. In light of these circumstances, we have strong doubts that a ministerial meeting at this time can achieve the breakthrough that actually provides the new trade flows needed to spur the global economy and help deliver on Doha's development promise.

In July of this year, we commended your administration for walking away from a lopsided WTO package that we in Congress would not have been able to support. Although we appreciate the tireless efforts of USTR negotiators to try to achieve a more favorable deal over the past several months, we see no tangible progress, and in fact believe that some of our trading partners have become even further entrenched in their unacceptable positions.


We strongly urge you not to allow the calendar to drive the negotiations through efforts to hastily schedule a ministerial meeting, without adequate groundwork having been laid. Developed and advanced developing countries must commit to provide meaningful new market access opportunities if Congress is to support a deal. If key trading partners are unwilling to do so at this time, then negotiations on a modalities package cannot conclude. Achieving the necessary flexibility from our trading partners could require new thinking, including revisiting the modalities approach, and our negotiators should be given time to explore such options. Otherwise, the likely result will be a deal that Congress cannot support—an outcome that would be detrimental to U.S. farmers, workers and firms, the global economy, and the WTO itself.

International trade flows and a strong rules-based trading regime can contribute to U.S. and global economic growth, which is particularly needed at this challenging time. To win Congressional support, any outcome to these negotiations must serve to facilitate meaningful increases in international trade flows and further strengthen the rules-based system of international trade.

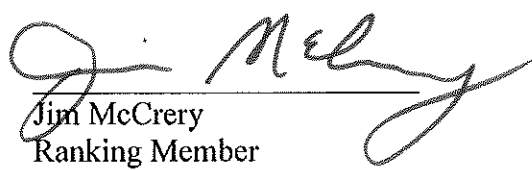
Respectfully yours,




Charles B. Rangel
Chairman
Committee on Ways and Means



Max Baucus
Chairman
Committee on Finance



Jim McCrery
Ranking Member
Committee on Ways and Means



Charles E. Grassley
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance