

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 8, 2011

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Leader McConnell:

As our nation continues to recover from the worst economic recession in a generation, we are writing to express our continued support for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs. With nearly 14 million people unemployed across this country, including more than 50,000 in Maine, TAA has been absolutely critical when it comes to assisting American workers whose trade-sensitive jobs have been adversely affected by increases in foreign imports or shifts in production overseas.

Over the last several years we have worked with our colleagues to reform and expand TAA, and as a result, thousands of eligible workers have been certified to receive job training and other crucial services necessary to prepare for and obtain suitable employment. In fact, key trade-impacted industries in our state – such as Maine’s pulp and paper manufacturing sector, lobstermen, and blueberry growers – view TAA as a crucial lifeline for those who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. Although TAA does not address all of the concerns facing communities impacted by trade, industries in Maine have expressed strong support for a continuation of these vital training and reemployment programs.

As you know, on December 22, 2010, Congress passed by unanimous consent a six-week extension of TAA, which is set to expire on February 13th. We have been working with our colleagues to extend TAA and provide funding so that families in Maine and across the U.S. have the tools and resources to prepare for new employment opportunities. As such, we strongly believe that extending TAA and securing a long-term reauthorization of these programs are paramount as the Senate considers key trade and competitiveness initiatives.

Thank you for your attention to this timely matter. We look forward to working with you to extend TAA and assist American workers.

Sincerely,



Olympia J. Snowe
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator