



**MAINE**  
**INTERNATIONAL**  
**TRADE CENTER**  
*Marketing Maine To The World*

December 16, 2009

Senator Olympia J. Snowe  
428A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Snowe:

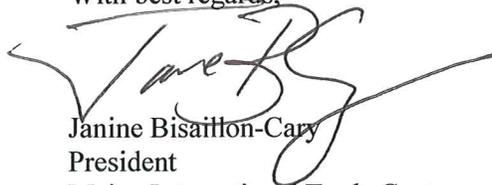
The Maine International Trade Center (MITC) is very pleased to offer its support for the Small Business Export Enhancement and International Trade Act of 2009 as well as the Small Business Trade Representation Act of 2009.

MITC, a public-private partnership of the state's government and business community, is Maine's international trade development agency. Since 1996, MITC has assisted thousands of companies and individuals through direct counseling, educational programming, and overseas business events. In 2009, MITC assisted over 1200 companies through our business counseling program, attracted nearly 700 participants to our educational program series, and brought 32 Maine companies on overseas trade events, with a reported \$24 million in sales.

As you know, Maine is a state of small business. 83% of the companies that use our services have 100 employees or less; 68% have less than 25. In our experience, the biggest barrier to international market entry for these small companies is financial – the costs of doing business overseas are higher and the needs are greater. Food and agricultural firms have had market entry support for many years through the Department of Agriculture, and these programs have been used to great success by our food, seafood, and forest products sectors. However, there has not been a similar program in place for small manufacturers or others that do not have an agricultural product. MITC is very pleased to see the STEP grant program included in the bill, as we believe it will make a direct and measureable impact on the ability of Maine's business community to fully participate in the global market.

Furthermore, MITC supports the other goals of this bill, including the creation of the SBA Office of International Trade, and appreciate your willingness to require this new office to coordinate its work with existing state and federal resources. Again, in our experience, small states' export programs are successful because we have a robust and effective internal network, and it is vitally important that new silos not be created. MITC sincerely appreciates that recognition and looks forward to working with SBA staff to bring even greater international success to Maine's business community.

With best regards,



Janine Bisailton-Cary  
President  
Maine International Trade Center