

Trade Policy Advisory Council Meeting

July 21, 2014

The second meeting of the Trade Advisory Council was convened by the Executive Director of the Minnesota Trade Office at 9:30 a.m. on July 21, 2014, in the Birch Conference Room at DEED.

In attendance:

Katie Clark Sieben, Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Employment & Economic Development

Kathleen Motzenbecker, Executive Director, Minnesota Trade Office

Kent Allin, Chief Procurement Officer, Minnesota Department of Administration

Josh Wise, Executive Director, Minnesota Fair Trade Coalition

Janiece Watts, Market Assistant, Rootstock Wine Company

Representative Jason Metsa, Minnesota House of Representatives

Kevin Paap, President, Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation

Eric Brand, Publisher & Director of Corporate Programs, Inter-American Dialogue

Steve Mertens, Senior Vice President of Operations, Holaira

Kim Babine, Director of Government Affairs, Minnesota Department of Employment & Economic Development

Thu-Mai Ho-Kim, Senior Research Analyst & Survey Developer, Minnesota Department of Employment & Economic Development

Tim Odegard, International Trade Representative, Minnesota Trade Office

Absent:

Senator John Hoffman, Minnesota Senate

Senator Jeremy Miller, Minnesota Senate

Representative David FitzSimmons, Minnesota House of Representatives

Sandra Renner, President, Global Resources Associates Incorporated, and Chair, District Export Council

Edward Reynoso, Political Director, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Joint Council 32

Doug Peterson, President, Minnesota Farmers Union

Commissioner Clark Sieben welcomed attendees and thanked everyone for their participation.

Representative Metsa called the meeting to order and asked Josh Wise to walk the group through the websites of four other state trade policy advisory groups:

- Washington Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Trade Policy
- Utah International Relations & Trade Commission
- Vermont Commission on International Trade & State Sovereignty
- Maine Citizen Trade Policy Commission

Metsa expressed his and Senator Hoffman's interest in following the Maine model, and suggested quarterly meetings for TPAC.

Motzenbecker stressed the importance of making sure that the council has statewide reach, both in terms of meetings and web presence. She suggested that public meetings be called on a case-by-case basis with a specific focus.

Clark Sieben stressed that any recommendations include all opinions represented by the council, and Brand suggested such a model employed by the Inter-American Dialogue on their policy statements.

Wise encouraged the council to make reasonable efforts to achieve consensus on joint statements.

Wise also proposed that TPAC apply for Cleared Advisor Status with the USTR for at least one council member. He would also like to see the council serve as a forum for taking public testimony on trade issues and creating a public record of that testimony.

Ho-Kim spoke about the trade data sources available to DEED, noting that state-by-state import numbers are more difficult to determine, and that export statistics are much more comprehensive.

Motzenbecker stated her view that the council's role should be to convene, collect and disseminate information, not to fulfill a formal reporting function.

Brand asked who would host the official TPAC website. Clark Sieben offered a page on the DEED website.

Metsa asked whether council members' expenses related to their service on the council were reimbursable. Babine noted that the statute creating TPAC specifically states that no compensation is provided. Wise suggested that the council might consider making a recommendation to provide reimbursement.

Paap stated that it would be unadvisable to present solid positions on specific issues, but rather that the council should concern itself with gathering and discussing information.

Motzenbecker asked when it would be best to convene a meeting to gather public testimony.

Clark Sieben cautioned that while it was good to seek testimony, the meetings to gather that testimony should be clearly and specifically focused.

Brand noted the council's mandate to provide information on how the state is affected by trade agreements.

Mertens wondered if we could leverage and learn from how other states have approached these issues.

Motzebecker suggested that the council survey the public on what trade issues they are interested in. Ho-Kim offered DEED's support for conducting any surveys. Watts stressed the importance of reaching out to a variety of concerned interest groups.

Wise suggested that Washington was a good model to follow, with its mandate to meet once a year. The scope of the council's information gathering could start out broad, and then narrow down depending on the information and interest. He noted that TTP will be discussed at the November APEC meeting, and encouraged the council to gather information ahead of that meeting, perhaps hearing public testimony in mid-to-late-September.

Motzenbecker asked whether the public testimony would be live or by survey. Wise and Metsa expressed an interest in seeing live testimony.

Motzenbecker reminded the group that the Minnesota Trade Office does not set trade policy for the state.

Babine clarified DEED's role on the council as providing administrative support, and that the council itself stands independently on its own.

Motzenbecker asked whether the meeting to gather public testimony should focus on TPP or TTIP. Wise suggested the hearing gather information on the broad impact of trade agreements in general. Clark Sieben spoke in favor of narrowing the scope of the testimony, and stated her view that this would enhance the impact of the council's work. Motzenbecker stated that a focus on TPP or TTIP would take a more future-focused view of trade. Watts agreed that public input on TPP would be valuable to gather prior to the November APEC summit. Consensus was that the group should focus on TPP.

The group agreed with Motzenbecker's proposal to schedule meeting to receive public testimony on TPP in the fall of 2014. A survey will be sent out a month prior to the hearing to gather information and to solicit public interest in providing testimony. The survey will be distributed through various mailing lists, including DEED's business lists, the Minnesota Fair Trade Coalition's mailing lists, and other interest groups' lists in order to reach a broad cross-section of Minnesota regions and interest groups.

Brand cautioned that the survey's wording should be very carefully prepared.

Wise suggested that members of the council solicit public testimony from individuals to present at the public hearing.

Motzenbecker stated that the results of the survey would be posted online and could be used to frame future TPAC meetings.

Allin urged an impartial economic analysis of trade agreement impacts.

Metsa stated that a summary of live testimony and survey results could be posted on the website to serve a public education function. He also suggested that the council provide a March briefing on its activities and findings to the legislature.

Allin asked for clarification of the audience for the information gathered by the council.

Motzenbecker referred to the statute that identifies the governor and the legislature as the primary audience. She confirmed the council's interest in holding a public hearing in October on the effects of the TPP on Minnesota and Minnesotans, and agreed to set up a TPAC web presence prior to the hearing. DEED will also develop a draft of a survey to send out ahead of the October meeting.

Metsa encouraged members of the council to contact him on his mobile phone at 218-290-1527 with any ideas or concerns related to the work of the council (text messaging preferred) and adjourned the meeting.