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"An Evening of Beef", Embassy of Japan

Max S. Baucus

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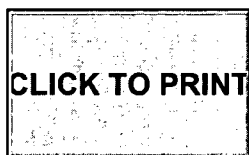
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(2) Subject* **"An Evening of Beef" Embassy of Japan**

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**“An Evening of Beef”
Embassy of Japan
Statement by Senator Max Baucus
April 23, 2013**

Good evening.

Thank you Ambassador Sasae [sa-SA-eh] for hosting tonight’s event. And thank you all for being here to celebrate the long partnership between the United States and Japan and a major aspect of that partnership – U.S. beef.

Japan is one of America’s strongest allies and greatest friends. And the relationship between our nations only continues to grow.

In that connection, Ambassador, I want to congratulate you on Japan's invitation to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations. The TPP will provide such tremendous economic opportunities for both our nations. I look forward to working with you to make the TPP a success, Ambassador Sasae.

And I'm also looking forward to hosting you in Montana this fall as part of my Ambassadors' Tour. I hold these events every few years in order to showcase Montana's tremendous resources — like Montana beef.

And as your predecessor Ambassador Ichiro Fujisaki can attest, Montana beef will be on the menu for every meal: breakfast, lunch, and dinner. So Ambassador Sasae, tonight's menu is a bit of a preview of what you can expect when you visit Big Sky Country.

Japan's renewed appreciation for U.S. beef was evident last October when a team of renowned Japanese chefs competed at the International Exhibition of Culinary Art. It is the biggest culinary event in the world.

Team Japan chose U.S. beef as the centerpiece of their presentation.

U.S. beef exports are now returning to levels we haven't seen for ten years. Thanks to Japan's decision in February to open its market to beef from cattle under 30 months of age, it will grow even further.

Japanese imports of U.S. beef are expected to approach \$1.5 billion by the end of the year, a new record.

And they will grow even further, as Japan continues to take steps to align its beef regulations with international standards. More work remains, but Japan has shown it is able to take the steps necessary to deepen our already strong relationship. I'm looking forward to that happening in the context of TPP as well.

Tonight we will get a first-hand taste of the top quality American beef that has again become standard on menus all across Japan.

I know you are all enjoying it as much as I am. Thank you.