

(Washington, DC) - **Congressman Wally Herger (R-CA), Ranking Member on the Subcommittee on Trade, issued the following statement in advance of this weekend's Group of 20 Economic Summit in New York City.** Considered by some as a possible Bretton Woods II conference, the Summit will bring together the world's leading economic powers to address the worldwide credit crunch and the future of the global economy. Herger urges a firm rejection of isolationist economic policies and calls for a renewed and stronger commitment to open markets as a critical component of an effective global response to the ongoing economic crisis:

"In 1944, the United States led the world's leading economic nations in designing the monetary and trade rules that would govern the industrialized world from that point forward. At the historic Bretton Woods Conference, participating nations stood firmly against the perils of protectionism, and they committed staunchly to the virtues of open markets. This commitment helped usher in an era of unprecedented economic growth and prosperity in our nation and across much of the world.

"Sixty-four years later, we are facing another global economic crisis. Contrary to the arguments of some, our nation's embrace of open markets has not caused this difficult economic climate but instead has generated record exports that have been a major bright spot in our economy and provided lower-cost goods that continue to benefit American families, workers, and small businesses. As the Group of 20 meets this weekend, I believe they must not forget the lessons of the anti-trade Smoot-Hawley Act of 1930, which worsened, prolonged, and internationalized the Great Depression. A new era of isolationist policies would likewise reduce global trade, undermining economic growth and job creation here at home and abroad. As British Prime Minister Gordon Brown aptly declared this week, 'The road to economic ruin in the past has been following the path of protectionism.' The United States and every nation at this weekend's summit must explicitly and completely reject this course.

"Instead, I strongly believe our nation must continue to recognize that open and fair trade is vital to our economy. I join Prime Minister Brown in urging Doha Round negotiations to move forward with renewed focus and urgency. In addition, I urge Speaker Pelosi to allow prompt consideration of the pending fair trade agreements with Colombia, Panama, and South Korea. These agreements would level the playing field for American workers and small businesses and provide a much-needed boost to our economy.

"Even standing idly by and not participating in fair trade deals is a new breed of self-defeating

protectionism. Our competitors in other nations are marching determinedly toward opening markets to one another, excluding U.S. workers and forcing U.S. exports to pay anticompetitive tariffs into those markets. We can not hide our heads in the sand as the global marketplace becomes more and more competitive. Doing so only places American workers and businesses at a tremendous disadvantage and ensures that future attempts to gain access to essential world markets will be exponentially more difficult. If we take a 'time out' from pursuing expanded market access as other nations advance without us, we risk worsening our current economic woes and losing our status as the world's leading economic powerhouse."