

**Rationale for Passing the Maple TAP Act as part of the Economic Stimulus Package**  
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Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY) introduced the Maple Tapping Access Program Act (S.2947) on April 30, 2008. The bill did not pass in 2008 and will be reintroduced in 2009 as a new bill with legislators from other maple producing states as co-sponsors. The Maple TAP Act would make funds available to states on a competitive basis in order to increase the number of maple trees being tapped on private forests. Given the need for "shovel-ready projects" that can spur immediate economic growth, increasing the level of maple production is a natural remedy to increasing rural vitality and economic development. This document outlines the rationale behind passing the Maple TAP Act as part of the upcoming economic stimulus package, with four main points described below:

The US was once the leader in maple production and could be again

When records started being kept in 1850, the US produced 80% of the world's syrup, whereas Canada now controls 80% of production. The reasons behind this shift are largely cultural and policy driven, as Quebec has invested substantially in its maple industry while the US has not. With assistance from the Maple TAP Act, the US can make similar investments and regain our market share in this growing industry.

The US has a tremendous resource of untapped maple trees

The US has nearly 2 billion potential taps spread across 20 states, yet we only put out ~7.5 million taps annually. This mediocre ~.4% utilization rate means that we only tap 1 in every 250 maple trees. In Quebec, they tap 1 of every 3 maples! Even though Vermont has only the seventh largest number of maple trees amongst the states, it dominates the US maple industry due to its relatively high utilization rate of 2.1%. If we were to increase the percentage of trees tapped across the US to that in Vermont, the resulting 42 million trees being tapped would move us ahead of Canadian production, and the economic impact of this increased production would be over \$300 million annually!

The US is currently a large net importer of maple products

We currently import 4 times as much maple syrup as we produce in the US. This presents an incredible opportunity to increase production and fill our own growing markets. With increased demand for local, homegrown food and a trend towards eating healthier, we are seeing drastic increases in pure maple syrup sales throughout the US. Worldwide markets for syrup are also growing rapidly as a result of Canadian investment, so there are increasing opportunities to export this high-value, uniquely North American product overseas.

Increasing production would add jobs and income to rural communities

Maple sugaring provides income to farmers and forest owners during the traditional slow period of the year. It also provides agri-tourism opportunities. In order to increase production and get new producers engaged, we need to invest in training and education to farmers and landowners. Passing the Maple TAP Act could provide the necessary resources to train the next generation of maple producers and increase the vitality of our rural northeastern forest communities.