

Opening Statement
The Honorable Adrian Smith, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation
Committee on Science and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives

*Commerce Department Programs to Support Job Creation and Innovation at Small- and
Medium-Sized Manufacturers*

January 21, 2010

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for calling this subcommittee hearing today to examine manufacturing innovation programs within the Department of Commerce. Supporting job creation and innovation at our small and medium-sized manufacturers is key to American competitiveness, and I look forward to working with you toward reauthorizing the America COMPETES legislation.

At yesterday's hearing, we benefited from the bird's eye perspective of our Nation's business leaders, and I am particularly interested to hear from our panelists today on some of the details. I would like to extend a welcome to all of you and thank you for taking the time and effort to share your expertise with us today.

In this time of economic uncertainty, with the unemployment at 10 percent, there is much this Congress can do to spur manufacturing – increasing access to foreign markets by approving trade agreements with Columbia, Panama, and South Korea; providing long-term certainty in the tax code by setting stable, low rates and making the R&D tax credit permanent; ensuring continued access to private capital for businesses; and taking advantage of opportunities to develop our available energy resources – including wind, hydro, solar, and hydrocarbon.

Within the purview of this Committee, we must work to keep the United States the world leader in developing new technologies by ensuring our manufacturers have access to the resources necessary to spur innovation. This includes developing talent through strong STEM education programs, providing necessary infrastructure and leadership through NIST, the National Science Foundation, and the Department of Commerce, and ensuring government research catalyzes private investment rather than displacing it.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today and to learning not only about the very real issues facing small and medium U.S. manufacturers, but also to the ways in which this Committee can assist, whether by ensuring access to necessary resources or merely getting out of the way.