

**Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke**  
**Remarks at White House Middle Class Task Force**  
**Meeting on Revitalizing American Manufacturing**  
**Washington, D.C.**

I want to thank Vice President Biden for convening this Middle Class Task Force meeting on revitalizing American manufacturing. It is a subject of vital concern to all of us in this administration.

In America, manufacturing has long been a vital source of innovation, and most important, of good, family-wage jobs.

In fact, total compensation for the average manufacturing employee is about 22 percent more than the average service sector worker—and he is more productive than ever

Today, if our country's manufacturing sector were the sole measure of America's economy, we would still represent the ninth largest economy in the world.

Even so, we can't ignore the fact that the share of manufacturing jobs in our economy has been declining for decades—due to many structural factors, but also to a misplaced belief in some quarters that America just didn't have to bother making things anymore.

To grow our economy, we must revitalize and re-imagine America's manufacturing base, and that's what this administration is committed to doing.

At the Commerce Department, we're working every day to jump-start manufacturing, with programs

- to improve manufacturers' efficiency and sustainability;
- to help unlock the potential of promising new markets like clean energy, and
- expand exports by increasing manufacturers' access to foreign markets around the world.

I'm excited to be here today and looking forward to a vibrant discussion. But first, I'd like to turn it over to Labor Secretary Hilda Solis. . . .

[Secretary Solis's remarks]

**1. Provide workers with the opportunity to obtain the physical and intellectual skills necessary to be productive**

*Commerce can work with industry to determine their labor needs and then with the Departments of Labor and Education to help develop policies that will be focused on achieving the needed outcome. Additionally, we can work with industry to develop public-private partnerships at all levels of education to stimulate the needed training.*

*What do you see as needed?*

**2. Invest in the creation of new technologies and business practices**

*Commerce looks to increase its dialogue with U.S. industries to identify new technologies to stimulate innovation across many industrial sectors. We are also positioned to work with other Departments to help focus their expertise on areas that will jump-start advanced technologies that would improve the productivity of firms or their response to global demand.*

*We currently work with the Department of Energy to make sure industry is aware of the research they perform. We can explore the basic research activities of other agencies to look for synergies, e.g., National Institutes of Health.*

**3. Develop stable and efficient capital markets for business investment**

*We have heard from our Manufacturing Council regarding access to credit for small- and medium-sized businesses in particular. The Council has provided some excellent recommendations on how to make credit available to SMEs. We will work with Treasury to help target where credit and capital is needed.*

**4. Help communities and workers transition to a better future**

*Through the Economic Development Administration (EDA), Commerce is helping communities develop and implement strategies for diversifying and strengthening their economies. Several EDA programs can be particularly valuable in helping to accelerate manufacturing innovation and competitiveness:*

- The **Trade Adjustment Assistance** for Firms Program funds eleven Trade Adjustment Assistance Centers across the nation that provide financial and technical assistance to import-impacted manufacturers for consultant services in the areas of marketing, process improvement, IT, engineering and more.
- EDA's **Revolving Loan Fund Program** provides loans to businesses with poor credit at lower than market interest rates to help them expand and create jobs.
- The **University Center Program** helps to make the vast resources of universities—such as faculty, staff, libraries, laboratories and computer systems—available to companies in their surrounding region.

*EDA supports the development of business incubators that nurture the growth of small businesses and create jobs. Business incubators are typically supported as construction projects that can be funded by either EDA's Economic Adjustment Assistance or Public Works Programs.*

## **5. Invest in an advanced transportation infrastructure**

*Commerce, in concert with the Department of Transportation, has begun working toward a more comprehensive and rationalized infrastructure. We began a national dialogue at a conference this past summer. We are looking for ways to develop a national freight policy that will yield intermodal transportation to make distribution within the United States and exporting to other markets quicker, less expensive and more energy efficient.*

*Not only are we looking at improving the physical infrastructure, but also the IT infrastructure.*

## **6. Ensure market access and a level playing field**

*Commerce understands the business of commerce, trade, and investment—and their interdependence.*

*We look for industry input on the most critical issues that affect the flow of U.S. trade, including which markets need to be more open and how to help ensure that there is a level playing field.*

*We can, and do, provide intellectual capital to make sure our negotiating positions support U.S. interests.*

*We provide strong analytical input to policy decisions, such as in the Section 421 Chinese tire case where President Obama enforced our trade laws to help level the playing field with China.*

**7. Improve the tax and regulatory climate, especially for manufacturing**

*Commerce focuses on the overall competitiveness of U.S. industry by researching and analyzing competitiveness factors that affect U.S. business sectors in the domestic and international environments.*

*We evaluate the effects of domestic regulatory policies on the ability of U.S. industry to compete in world markets and work with other U.S. agencies to reduce unintended impact of these policies on U.S. industry's competitiveness.*