

# Remarks at the 50th Annual Presidential “E” Awards

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### **Commerce Secretary John Bryson**

### **Remarks at the 50th Annual Presidential “E” Awards**

Thank you, Valerie [Jarrett]. And thank you for all you do for American businesses and their workers. Truly, it’s a great moment to be an American exporter. I want to start by congratulating all of you on the highest recognition that any American business can achieve in exporting.

For just a moment, let’s look back at the history of the awards. As some of you know, these awards go back even further than the 50-year milestone that we celebrate today. During World War II, more than 4,000 what-were-called “E Pennants” were presented to war plants in recognition of excellence in production.

In fact, one of the recipients of those E-Pennant awards—from back in 1942—is here today. So let’s give a special round of applause to one of today’s winners—a company that makes bearings in Philadelphia—Kingsbury, Incorporated.

Twenty years later, in 1961, President Kennedy established the E-Awards as we know them today—with a focus on recognizing the top U.S. exporters.

The Commerce Department took the reins in administering the awards.

Back then, the Census Bureau valued American exports at just over \$26 billion dollars. We’ve come a long way over the past 50 years. Last year, we hit an all-time record of \$2.1 trillion in U.S. exports. That’s an 80-fold increase.

Today, people around the world want Made in America products more than ever before. In fact, just last week, we announced that exports in the first quarter of this year were up over eight percent from the same period in 2011.

In addition, from 2009 to 2011, the number of export-supported jobs increased by 1.2 million. That’s important because export-related jobs pay 13 to 18 percent higher—on average—than others.

But we can't let up. After all, the president has called for American businesses to double U.S. exports by 2015. So we need all hands on deck.

Already, the president himself has opened up new markets and reduced tariffs through new agreements in Korea and—just this week—Colombia. We need to get the word out about these new opportunities—as well as other opportunities in fast-growing markets like India and Brazil.

In short, we need to do everything possible to ensure that all U.S. businesses—both large and small—can build it here, and sell it everywhere.

At the Commerce Department, we're going to work even harder to give you the tools you need: through trade missions and advocacy, through financing from the Export-Import Bank, which Congress has just reauthorized, and, of course, through the world-class foreign and domestic commercial service in over 100 U.S. cities and 75 countries.

We want to empower you to sell even more Made-in-America products: From NuStep's exercise equipment made in Michigan, to high-performance socks and gloves from North Carolina—made by DeFeet, to underwater flashlights from Pelican Products in the greater Los Angeles area—where I'm from.

And it's wonderful to hear that 20 of you are manufacturers, 35 are small- and medium-sized businesses, and many more of you provide specialized services that are crucial to supporting American exporters.

Most important, all of you are creating good jobs and stronger communities here at home. If we continue to step up America's exports, we can drive even more prosperity for our businesses and our workers.

So, congratulations to both our E-Award and E-Star recipients who have worked so hard to earn this honor. Keep up the good work