



Olympia J. Snowe

U.S. Senator, Maine

NEWS RELEASE

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Snowe, Lieberman, Kohl Praise Added Funding for Manufacturing Extension Partnership

WASHINGTON D.C. – The Senate Appropriations Committee today adopted an amendment offered by U.S. Senator Herb Kohl and supported by U.S. Senators Olympia J. Snowe (R-Maine) and Joe Lieberman (I-Conn.) on behalf of the Senate Task Force on Manufacturing, to increase funding for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) to \$110 million as part of the Fiscal Year 2009 Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations bill. The MEP assists small- and medium-sized American manufacturers to modernize to compete in the demanding global marketplace. While the Senators were pleased that the Appropriations Committee provided \$110 million for the MEP, they called for further increases in the future, to bring funding in line with the \$122 million authorized by the 2007 America COMPETES Act.

“The MEP is absolutely critical to the health of our nation’s manufacturing sector, particularly during the challenging economic times currently facing the nation,” said Senator Snowe, Co-Chair of the Senate Task Force on Manufacturing and Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship. “Our economy could greatly benefit from the increased productivity and job creation that results from the services provided by the MEP to our nation’s small-and medium-sized manufacturers. The Senate Task Force on Manufacturing has long led initiatives to secure MEP funding and will continue to fight for increased appropriations.”

“We would like to thank Senator Snowe for her longstanding commitment to the MEP,” said Rod Rodrigue, President of the Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership. “Today’s victory is a direct result of Senator Snowe’s leadership on the Senate Task Force on Manufacturing, which in April led a letter, signed by 58 Senators, to the Senate Appropriations Committee urging funding for this vital program. The Maine MEP is committed to helping our state’s small manufacturers create jobs and drive innovation in the global marketplace.”

“At a time when America’s small businesses are facing stiff challenges in an increasingly competitive global economy, the Manufacturing Extension Partnership helps provide our firms with tools they need to grow and prosper. I applaud the actions taken by the Appropriations Committee, and I will also continue to push my colleagues to support this and other efforts to help American manufacturers,” said Senator Lieberman, Co-Chair of the Senate Task Force on Manufacturing.

“The Manufacturing Extension Partnership program has a proven record of strengthening the vitality and productivity of small- and medium-sized manufacturers, helping them remain strong employers,” said Kohl, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee. “I am pleased that we were able to boost resources for this program that has helped businesses grow and has kept good paying jobs in the United States since its inception. In my state of Wisconsin, the MEP has successfully created or saved 8,000 jobs over the last five years. With this increase in federal funding, it will continue to have a positive impact on job security and our economy.”

The Manufacturing Extension Partnership is a nationwide network of not-for-profit centers in over 400 locations nationwide, serving all 50 states and Puerto Rico, which are linked together through the Department of Commerce’s National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). It is an invaluable federal program that provides technical assistance to small- and medium-sized manufacturers, enabling them to enhance productivity and competitiveness and thus create and retain jobs in the United States. It is crucial that the MEP receive at least \$110 million for Fiscal Year 2009. The country’s approximately 341,000 small manufacturers account for over one half of the total value of U.S. production and represent 99 percent of manufacturing establishments.

Additionally, small manufacturing jobs are high skilled and high wage, with manufacturing employees earning 25 percent more than retail employees per hour. Moreover, MEP clients achieve productivity gains that are more than four times greater than comparable firms that do not receive MEP assistance. Such gains have fostered tremendous growth for these companies. In fiscal year 2006 alone, MEP clients reported 52,585 new or retained workers, sales of \$6.8 billion, cost savings of \$1.1 billion, and plant and equipment investments of \$1.36 billion. These results are a direct consequence of MEP assistance.

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