



**Statement for the Record
Senator Olympia J. Snowe
February 4, 2009**

Ms. SNOWE. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on behalf of an amendment to the stimulus bill that Senators Kohl, Brown, Levin, Sanders, Stabenow, Whitehouse and I are introducing. The amendment will restore funding for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) to the level included in the House-passed bill. It ensures that \$30 million currently contained in the bill for the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) go specifically to the MEP to continue its critical operations on behalf of small and medium-sized manufacturers nationwide. This would not increase the size of the stimulus bill; rather, it would simply reallocate funding to the MEP.

If our goal in this stimulus is to create and retain jobs, then there is no better program to fund than the MEP. Administered by NIST and with centers in every state, the MEP provides our nation's nearly 350,000 small manufacturers with services and access to resources that enhance growth, improve productivity, and expand capacity. At a time when our economy is suffering its worst downturn since the Great Depression, the MEP's work is crucial to helping those manufacturers be stronger long-term competitors both domestically and internationally. This will, in turn, allow them to create good-paying high-skill jobs.

As Co-Chair of the Senate Task Force on Manufacturing, I have seen firsthand the effect our country's manufacturing industry has on the vitality of our economy. By directing \$30 million to the MEP, we will be sending a clear signal to small manufacturers that they will continue to play a vital role in reinvigorating our economy. I urge my colleagues to adopt this amendment.