

Opening Statement
The Honorable Ralph M. Hall (R-TX), Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on Science and Technology
*The Future of Manufacturing: What is the Role of the Federal Government in Supporting
Innovation by U.S. Manufacturers*
Wednesday, March 17, 2010

Thank you Chairman Gordon for calling this hearing to examine whether there is an appropriate role for the federal government in supporting U.S. manufacturing innovation, and if so, what that role is.

I am very interested to hear what our witnesses have to say today, so I will be very brief. As this is another hearing geared towards the reauthorization of the America COMPETES Act, let me reiterate that all of us recognize the magnitude of importance that a robust federal research and development enterprise has on our economy, our national security, and our ability to be globally competitive; however, we also need to understand our current economic reality.

It could be argued that some of our economic woes are a result of manufacturers, not unlike the ones before us today, being overregulated and forced to take their business outside of the United States, costing everyday Americans their jobs. I'm sure the same is true for U.S. manufacturing R&D efforts, as well. With specific regard to the R&D jurisdiction of this Committee when it comes to manufacturing, I am particularly struck by a statement provided by the National Petroleum Refiners Association that states, "With increasing regulations, many companies have been forced to decrease their R&D budgets and shift their resources to regulatory compliance." (Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that their written statement be made part of the record.)

In addition, I am also eager to hear how the billions of dollars the federal government has invested in GM is helping them spur innovation and technology in their manufacturing, but perhaps that's best left for questioning.

So, with that, I welcome our witnesses to the hearing, and I look forward to receiving your testimony.