

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ASIA, THE PACIFIC, AND THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

Donald A. Manzullo (IL-16), Ranking Member
Opening Statement

October 14, 2009

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this important hearing regarding the future of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum. The importance of the Asia-Pacific region to health and wellbeing of the global economy cannot be understated. APEC stands at the center of Asia's economic cooperation, and the United States has an important role to play in this region.

I urge the Obama Administration to its utmost to harness the full potential of APEC to help boost American exports to Asia. The total size of APEC illustrates the importance of this organization for America. For example, APEC members account for approximately 45 percent of all international trade, and it has a population of over 2.7 billion people. This represents an enormous market for American goods and services. It is the only multilateral organization in Asia that meets annually at the presidential level, and the only organization besides the World Trade Organization that includes both the People's Republic of China and Taiwan as members. In fact, APEC is the only Asia-based organization that the U.S. participates in as a full member.

Boosting America's competitiveness overseas is one of the most important jobs that I have as a representative serving the hard working people of the 16th Congressional District of Illinois. The 16th District has over 1,300 manufacturers making everything from paper boxes to iron foundries and metal stamping to custom gears. The vast majority of these manufacturers are small businesses and they are doing their best to stay competitive. I have dedicated my

entire service in Congress to promote products made in America and to keep jobs at home. Strengthening APEC is an important part of enhancing U.S. exports. For example, Illinois companies exported more than \$33.5 billion worth of goods to APEC countries in 2008. This represents an amazing growth rate of over \$14 billion from 1999 to 2008. I want to see this trend continue.

Earlier this year I introduced an amendment to the State Department Authorization bill (H.R. 2410) that directs the Department to do more to assist small and medium size businesses seeking to participate in APEC. Since small size businesses are the core drivers of the American economy it is only proper for the Administration to do its utmost to help them get the most out of APEC. Thus, I am interested in hearing more from our distinguished witnesses regarding their efforts to help small businesses at APEC.

With the U.S. poised to host APEC in 2011 there remain a number of questions yet to be answered regarding the Administration's plans for the event. While 2011 seems a long ways away, the reality is that a large event such as APEC requires significant long-term planning. For example, what are the costs associated with hosting APEC? What are the prospects for an APEC Travel Card program to be in place and operational by 2011? Will the U.S. seriously consider the Trans-Pacific Partnership as a model for future free trade agreements absent progress at the World Trade Organization?

This year APEC will celebrate its 20th anniversary and begins counting down in earnest to 2011 when the U.S. hosts APEC. I urge the Administration to reach out to Congress as early as possible to build support for this important event. I thank the witnesses for being here today, and I look forward to their testimony.