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Wyden Statement on Strengthening American Manufacturing through Fresh Trade Policy
As Prepared for Delivery

Americans – from the water cooler to professional societies – are often debating the future of American manufacturing. Academic journals are filled with articles where naysayers say that American manufacturers can't compete with cheap labor in Asia, or that robots and computers do the jobs once held by middle class workers.

This hearing will show that it is too soon to hang the crepe on American manufacturing, because there is reason to be optimistic. Many American manufacturing companies are succeeding in tough, global markets. Manufacturing accounts for more than \$2 trillion of the American economy. It supports more than 17 million American jobs. And it drives three quarters of all private-sector spending on R&D. There are more players in the manufacturing game, but the bottom line is we're more than holding our own.

That's not to say that there haven't been significant challenges in recent years, and that it will be smooth sailing from here on out.

U.S. manufacturers have run up against greater competition today -- and some of it is unfair -- than in decades past. Fifty or sixty years ago, the United States was the world's factory, accounting for 40 percent of the world's manufactured goods. Today the U.S. accounts for less than 20 percent.

But American manufacturing has real strengths and opportunities to build upon. Technology is one area where America leads. The same is true in finished products and production methods. It is important for this committee to identify and examine which policies have stifled manufacturing and learn the lessons of the past. The focus today will be on fresh trade-related policies that can unleash the full potential of American manufacturers and give them a springboard to create good paying, middle class jobs.

There is a tremendous opportunity before American producers. There are about to be a billion new middle-class consumers in markets around the world with money to spend. And that number will only grow as more people rise out of poverty. Many of these consumers prize American-made products for their top-notch quality, safety, and reliability. The American brand sells.

Furthermore, America's manufacturers are at the forefront of the innovative fields that will lead our economy into the future – clean energy, health care, and information technology.

For example, Oregon's largest manufacturer, Intel, is here today. Their products are at the core of computing equipment and form the foundation of the global digital economy. Intel is competing and winning in tough global markets. And there are many more examples of vibrant manufacturers from my home state.

Brammo, based just outside Medford, makes award-winning electric vehicles. A-dec, based in Newberg, makes some of the world's best dental equipment. Erickson, based in Portland, makes heavy-lift aircraft for a huge number of uses.

There's no question that American manufacturing has a lot of room to grow. But I'm sure every member of this committee has seen thriving, cutting-edge manufacturers like these back in their home states. The investments these manufacturers make support healthy, stable communities, and they create good-paying jobs for middle-class Americans.

The right policies – especially on trade – can help kick off a new era defined by successful, sustained manufacturing in the U.S. Those policies should reflect what U.S. manufacturing looks like today and where it's headed in the future – not what it looked like 10 or 20 years ago.

They should dismantle trade barriers U.S. manufacturers face abroad – like tariffs on high-tech products, requirements to relocate factories, IP theft, and anti-competitive subsidies for state-owned enterprises. And they should foster an environment in which U.S. manufacturers of all sizes can grow and create good middle-class jobs.

The goal should be to make things here, add value to them here, and ship them somewhere. Today's hearing gives the Finance Committee a chance to develop trade policies that can help the U.S. meet that goal.

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