



**Opening Statement of
Chairman Sam Graves
Committee on Small Business
Hearing: “Ready to Export: Small Business Policy Recommendations for USTR”
June 26, 2013**

Good afternoon. This hearing will come to order.

I want to thank our witnesses for making the trip to Washington for this important hearing. We look forward to your testimony.

This hearing comes at an important time for the international trade community. Last week at the G-8 Summit in Northern Ireland, President Obama officially launched trade negotiations with the European Union. In addition, Michael Froman was sworn in as the United States Trade Representative (USTR). It appears that we may have some momentum on the trade agenda, which is welcome news to many small businesses.

This Committee understands the benefits of international trade for small firms and the economy overall. In 2012, exports of goods and services reached \$2.2 trillion, or nearly 14 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product. Those exports provide new sales opportunities and most importantly, they help create and support good paying American jobs.

Unfortunately, along with limited resources, small firms face a variety of trade barriers that constrain their participation in the global market. As a result, small businesses that do export rely heavily on the negotiated free trade agreements that remove complex trade barriers, provide protection for their intellectual property and help streamline the trade process.

Currently, USTR is working on a variety of initiatives that will help remove barriers and open new markets for small business exporters. Most notably, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and World Trade Organization negotiations regarding services and information technology. These agreements hold great potential for small businesses and we must make these negotiations a priority.

Earlier this year, the Committee drafted a set of trade policy principles aimed at identifying no cost, common sense solutions to assist small business exporters. The first principle, and the primary focus of today’s hearing, is developing an aggressive trade strategy to open new markets for U.S. exporters.

We cannot sit on the sidelines while other countries negotiate trade agreements and put our businesses at a competitive disadvantage. We need leadership from the Administration and the new USTR to seize these opportunities.

Today we will hear directly from small businesses about the Administration’s trade policy agenda, and specifically how to help increase U.S. exports and create new good paying U.S. jobs.

Again, I want to thank our witnesses for their participation. I now yield to our Ranking Member for her opening remarks.