

## Opening Statement for Chairman Steve Chabot

*Expediting Economic Growth: How Streamlining Federal*

*Permitting Can Cut Red Tape for Small Businesses*

September 6, 2017

### AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

Good morning. I call this hearing to order.

The Small Business Committee is here today to examine how the federal permitting process hurts small businesses. As this Committee well knows, complying with regulations is one of the biggest challenges facing small businesses today. The time and cost to comply with the growing number of regulations stymies economic growth and stifles innovation.

The federal permitting process is a component of this vast regulatory state. Usually before a business can begin to open its doors, launch a project, or begin an initiative, it must obtain a number of permits before moving forward.

But the current permitting process is a maze that businesses—big and small—must navigate. And as with regulations generally, the federal permitting process disproportionately affects small businesses.

To obtain all of the proper permits, small businesses must often:

- Deal with several agencies and departments with overlapping regulatory jurisdiction;
- Endure lengthy delays waiting for permitting decisions; and
- Cope with increasing costs to comply with these federal permitting requirements.

Our witnesses today will provide real examples of what it is like to comply with our complex federal permitting process. Having to constantly check boxes to move forward with a project. Having to fill out difficult permitting applications, only to wait for months and years for agencies to make decisions. Having to do the nearly impossible to meet all the permitting requirements while keeping their doors open.



The current Administration has taken positive steps to address the federal permitting process, including two Executive Orders and a Presidential Memorandum. These actions acknowledge the burden the federal permitting process imposes on the economy.

This is a good start. But we must continue to look for ways to simplify and streamline the permitting process. Especially to ease the regulatory burden on small businesses, our economy's lifeblood.

That is why I introduced H.R. 33, the Small Business Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act of 2017 at the beginning of this year. This bill ensures that federal agencies actually examine the impact of new regulations on small businesses and consider ways to reduce unnecessary costs and burdens.

The Small Business Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act was included in a larger bill, H.R. 5—the Regulatory Accountability Act of 2017—which passed the House with a bipartisan vote in January.

The Senate has introduced a similar bill, S. 584, and we are waiting for them to take up this important legislation, hopefully soon. If passed, the Small Business Regulatory Flexibility Improvements Act will be another step toward easing the regulatory burden on small businesses.

I want to thank the witnesses here today. We appreciate you taking the time to travel to Washington, DC to testify about your experiences. We look forward to your testimony today.

I now yield to the Ranking Member, Ms. Velázquez, for her opening statement.

