
APEC press release - US Commerce Secretary urges green business strategies

Issued by the APEC Small and Medium Enterprises Working Group

APEC needs to put empowerment of SMEs at center of economic agenda: US Commerce Secretary

Big Sky, Montana, 18 May, 2011 - “Growing renewable energy industries, such as wind, solar and biofuels, are a critical part of catalyzing clean economic growth,” said [US Commerce Secretary Gary Locke](#) on Wednesday in Big Sky, Montana.

Locke made his remarks at the Enhancing Competitiveness through Green Growth Forum. The meeting was organized by the APEC Small and Medium Enterprises Working Group. A video of his remarks will be available on the [APEC website](#).

Locke said that over the next few decades, world economies will need to rebuild and reinvent virtually every industrial activity – from power generation and transportation to manufacturing and construction – to succeed in an energy environment that looks drastically different than the one we've grown used to.

“The potential new business and new job creation in front of us is astounding,” said Locke.

Locke characterized the issue with an example of one of the challenges facing the United States. In the United States, buildings consume 40 percent of energy and 73 percent of electricity. They are responsible for about 39 percent of carbon emissions – more than the transportation or industrial sectors.

But he also expressed optimism. “It's no surprise then that greening these buildings can create immense economic opportunity, with the overall green building market projected to reach as much as \$140 billion worldwide by 2013.”

“A big part of the answer lies with the small and medium-sized enterprises,” he continued. “This is why APEC member economies need to put the empowerment of small businesses at the very center of our economic agendas.”

“I don't think there's any question that APEC member economies greatly value the power of thriving small businesses -- especially when it comes to spurring clean growth.

But small companies continue to face hurdles in the APEC region. The International Trade Commission and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development identified excessive transportation costs and customs clearance delays; difficulty protecting intellectual property and preferential tariff rates; and lack of access to financing and information as the main culprits to growth.

Locke urged APEC member economies to pursue policies that unleash innovation and enable entrepreneurs.

“The job of APEC policymakers is to help create an environment that supports the risk-taking and innovation that will be so important to promoting clean growth in the years to come,” said Locke.

He also said that policies need to be developed to give entrepreneurs the tools to succeed no matter where they live.

APEC Senior Officials from APEC's 21 member economies concluded their meeting today. APEC Trade Ministers and Small and Medium Enterprise Ministers are to convene from May 19-21 here and will focus on APEC's 2011 agenda to further advance free and open trade in the region.