

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION GRANTEE HEARING

Wednesday, February 3, 2010

Opening Statement

Alan B. Mollohan, Chairman

Good morning. Welcome. This hearing is called to order.

In fiscal year 2010, Congress provided \$255,000,000 for the Economic Development Administration's (EDA) economic development assistance programs, and in fiscal year 2011, the budget proposes \$246,000,000. Beyond the proposed \$9,000,000 reduction, the budget also proposes to shift almost \$90,000,000 from public works grants to economic adjustment assistance grants. EDA provides critical funding for communities across the Nation, working with State and local governments, private industry, academia, and nonprofits, and leveraging investments to create and sustain jobs and improve local economies. Through the testimony of today's witnesses, we will hear about the value of such appropriations to local communities, as well as suggestions from grantees on how EDA can improve its processes and provide better services as it plays a critical role in our National economy.

Today, we will hear from grantees from various regions, with a wide variety of EDA grant experiences. Each grantee will touch on his depth of EDA experience. Most of, if not all, our witnesses have received public works grants, possibly the most important and clearly the most traditional of EDA's grant options. Today's witnesses will also talk about the importance of planning grants; economic development districts; disaster assistance; revolving loan funds; university centers; and technical assistance. Through their collective testimony, the subcommittee hopes to gain an alternative view of EDA's programs and their effectiveness – a view from the ground, a view from implementers – a perspective we often don't get from the beltway.

In the first panel, we will hear from John Brown, Executive Director of the Brooke-Hancock Regional Planning and Development Council in Weirton, WV; and Michael King, Executive Director of the North Country Council in Bethlehem, NH and board member of the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO).

In the second panel, we will hear from Mayor David Bradford of the City of Muscle Shoals, AL, and immediate past chairman of the Northwest Alabama Council of Local Governments; Chuck Wemple, Economic Development Program Manager of the Houston-

Galveston Area Council; and Dr. Les Wyatt, President of the Arkansas State University System.

Thank you all for coming.

Following the opening statement of Ranking Member Wolf, we will ask each of you to provide a brief summary of your written testimony, which will be included in the hearing record, and then we will go to questions from subcommittee members.