

**Ambassador Murray's  
Opening Statement to HFAC Indo-Pacific Sub-Committee Hearing  
on "Commerce as Statecraft: Better Leveraging U.S. Business to Advance  
our Economic and National Security Goals in the Indo-Pacific"  
March 21, 2024, 2:00 p.m.**

Chairwoman Kim, Ranking Member Bera, thank you for inviting me to discuss the Administration's efforts to engage the Indo-Pacific region through the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum. I appreciate the opportunity today to contribute alongside Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Moy and Deputy Assistant Secretary Phan to highlight our partnership with the U.S. business community and other stakeholders as we seek to expand U.S. leadership in the region through APEC.

APEC's 21 member economies account for more than 60 percent of global GDP and nearly half of global trade, including seven of the United States' top 10 trading partners. U.S. exports to the APEC region top \$1.3 trillion, and companies from APEC economies have invested more than \$1.7 trillion in the United States, creating good paying jobs across the country. The East-West Center estimates that exports to other APEC economies directly or indirectly support nearly seven million jobs in the United States, including through greenfield investments in electric vehicles and batteries.

Our economic prosperity therefore relies on continued U.S. leadership in this pivotal region. APEC includes partners on both sides of the Pacific with a wide range of economic conditions, and it provides a platform to engage 20 other economies, including importantly, Taiwan, which is a full member of APEC.

APEC has a well-deserved reputation as an incubator for innovative solutions to economic challenges, dating back to when the United States hosted the first-ever APEC Leaders' meeting in Seattle in 1993. In the thirty years since, there has been a growing evolution in APEC's policy focus. Once a forum concentrated nearly exclusively on trade and investment liberalization and facilitation, there is now a recognition that APEC is uniquely positioned to

advance economic and trade policies that contribute positively to uplifting livelihoods and advancing sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

In 2023, we hosted APEC again, for a third time, which provided an invaluable opportunity for the United States to lead on multilateral economic cooperation, enhance engagement with regional partners, uphold international rules and norms, deliver substantive policy outcomes on economic sustainability, resiliency, and inclusion, and – importantly for today’s hearing – strengthen public-private collaboration. This collaboration is essential not only for our work in APEC, but for U.S. economic leadership in the Indo-Pacific region.

Under the U.S. APEC host year theme of “Creating a Resilient and Sustainable Future for All,” the United States deepened its commitment to leading the global economy to drive inclusive economic growth for the benefit of American workers, families and businesses while delivering prosperity across the region.

The United States is proud of our legacy of launching the first APEC Women and the Economy Forum during our prior U.S. APEC host year in 2011. We continue to work very hard to ensure all our region’s communities have an equal opportunity to participate fully in the Asia-Pacific’s dynamic economy. Through ministerial-level dialogues, including a dialogue with trade ministers focused on trade and working people, and a discussion with Indigenous representatives from across the APEC region, we prioritize cooperation in APEC which would ensure all our region’s communities have an equal opportunity to participate fully in the Asia-Pacific’s dynamic economy.

We also have focused on the important contributions made by small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to the U.S. economy and other economies in the region. In addition to meeting stakeholders in cities where we hosted APEC, I had the privilege of hearing from many SME owners and entrepreneurs through our stakeholder engagement efforts last year, from Pittsburgh to Atlanta to Seattle.

We developed outreach strategies in 2023 to ensure that SMEs from across the United States would have the opportunity to participate in the APEC CEO Summit and other APEC public-private events throughout our host year, and we will continue to do so. During APEC Economic Leaders' Week last November, the Administration highlighted \$50 billion of new U.S. private sector investments into APEC economies and \$200 billion of new private sector investments from the Asia-Pacific into the United States since the start of the Biden-Harris Administration.

These investments are supporting high-quality jobs here in the United States, as well as in the APEC region.

One of APEC's real advantages as a platform for engagement is the opportunity for U.S. companies to contribute directly to the policy process, ensuring that our policy work in APEC advances shared objectives and is responsive to the challenges faced by businesses and other stakeholders. Through the Seattle-based National Center for APEC and other business associations under the U.S.-APEC Business Coalition, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and U.S.-ASEAN Business Council, we have worked to demonstrate that active private sector engagement is the "secret sauce" of APEC's success. Furthermore, APEC Leaders also appoint senior business executives to the APEC Business Advisory Council. U.S. representatives, selected by the White House, offer a private sector perspective to APEC Leaders and ensure there is a level playing field for U.S. companies in the region. U.S. members in recent years have represented a range of industries and firms of all sizes.

Through our engagement in APEC, we also seek to advance a policy agenda that supports U.S. private sector strengths. For example, as we support sustainability through a focus on a just energy transition, promote digital connectivity and developing digital skills, and reinforce resilience through secure supply chains, we recognize these priorities are areas where U.S. firms have a competitive advantage because they are constantly evolving, innovating, and adapting.

When Leaders met in San Francisco last November, they endorsed several important outcomes through the *Golden Gate Declaration* that demonstrate how APEC benefits the American people:

- San Francisco Principles on Integrating Inclusivity and Sustainability into Trade and Investment, which outline how underrepresented communities can have a voice in the development of trade policy and benefit from international trade, and further underscores the importance of environmental sustainability in doing so;
- Just Energy Transition Principles, which demonstrate ways to minimize potential effects of a move to cleaner energy sources on groups and communities at the frontlines of energy production;
- Principles for Achieving Food Security Through Sustainable Agri-Food Systems, which help us support agricultural production and supply chains as we grapple with environmental challenges; and
- Updated Disaster Risk Reduction Framework and Action Plan, which outlines ways to mitigate the effects of natural disasters, which can happen to any of our citizens, at any time, anywhere.

We also advanced impactful outcomes at the Ministerial level, including in areas as diverse as cloud computing, anti-corruption, and worker training.

This year, Peru is hosting APEC and has committed to continue to move forward on many of the U.S. priorities that we successfully advanced last year, particularly in the areas of sustainability, the digital economy, economic inclusion, and resilience.

APEC is a key part of the Indo-Pacific Strategy's economic prosperity pillar, but as today's hearing demonstrates, it is by no means the only initiative we are carrying forward. Our engagement in APEC is complementary to other efforts, including through the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, the Quad, ASEAN, and other regional and bilateral mechanisms.

The APEC region remains central to the economic future of the United States. Our exports to this vibrant region support nearly seven million jobs here in the United States, in every corner of the country. Many of those jobs are at amazing, women-owned businesses like Chukar Cherries, based in Prosser, Washington. When we hosted a series of APEC meetings in Seattle last year, I had the great pleasure of meeting with Pam Montgomery, the firm's founder and CEO. She told me that her firm was very heavily tapped into the Asia-Pacific, with partners across the region, and was "open for business."

We remain committed to strong collaboration with our private sector partners to ensure that APEC continues to provide opportunities for innovative companies like Pam's – and others in every sector of our economy – to create jobs, drive long-term prosperity, and help the United States continue to chart the course for the region's economy.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

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