

Testimony of Patrick Kirwan
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United States Department of Commerce
before the
United States House of Representatives
Committee on Small Business
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"Partners in Commerce: The Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee"
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Chairman Chabot, Ranking Member Velázquez, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today about ongoing efforts to enhance coordination among Federal, State, and local trade promotion agencies.

The Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration (ITA) is the primary agency responsible for strengthening the competitiveness of U.S. industry in the global marketplace, promoting U.S. exports, monitoring compliance with U.S. trade agreements, and enforcing U.S. trade laws.

The Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee (TPCC) is an interagency task force that works together to make it easier for U.S. businesses to take advantage of Federal programs, and to enhance the ability of American exporters to compete and win in international markets. State and local trade promotion agencies, as well as non-governmental partners, play critical roles in helping U.S. businesses become export-ready, promoting American goods and services in international markets, and providing financing that supports their business. The TPCC works closely with our partners to identify opportunities for increased coordination and cooperation to help leverage resources and deliver services to U.S. companies effectively and efficiently. Past successes have included joint strategic planning, joint export counseling, cross-training, client referrals, and event planning, while respecting differences in performance measures, reporting requirements, and organizational structures.

In order to improve coordination across all levels of government, we have modified Federal performance metrics to emphasize the need for local coordination. ITA has the largest domestic presence of all Federal trade promotion agencies, with over 100 domestic field offices. In 2014, we updated the performance plans for the directors of our domestic field offices to expressly mandate coordination with State and local partners.

Now, the directors of these field offices work with State and local partners each year to develop community-specific annual plans that balance State and local priorities with Federal trade promotion strategic objectives.

With the enactment of the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015, the TPCC was directed to develop a comprehensive plan to integrate the resources and strategies of State trade promotion agencies into the overall Federal trade promotion program. Secretary Ross submitted

that plan to Congress on May 16, 2017, and I think it demonstrates how hard we are working to enhance our collaboration with our State and local partners.

The Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015 also required the Secretary of Commerce to develop an annual Federal-State export strategy for each State that submits an export strategy. This requirement, which has encouraged States to develop their own plans and to actively collaborate with Federal agencies, has helped us engage in long-term joint planning efforts.

The TPCC is constantly striving to deliver a positive return on investment for hardworking American taxpayers. Throughout our research and continued collaboration with our partners, we have made tremendous strides in improving coordination and reducing duplication. We remain committed to providing American companies with the highest level of service across all levels of government to help them achieve their exporting goals and support U.S. jobs.

The Federal and State Export Promotion Coordination plan identified opportunities for us to enhance our work, for example: additional international trade specialist training and direct training of exporters; coordination through the Small Business Administration's State Trade Expansion Program (STEP) award process; standardized client referral procedures; and greater utilization of existing partnership programs, among others. The Commerce Department is now working with the other TPCC agencies and our State and local partners to determine how we can move forward on these ideas.

With the Federal and State Export Promotion Coordination plan as a roadmap, the TPCC will continue to draw upon the resources and expertise of Federal, State, and local trade agencies to increase U.S. exports and support U.S. jobs.

Thank you, again, for this opportunity to testify. I look forward to answering your questions.