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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

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ELLEN DONESKI, STAFF DIRECTOR
BRIAN M. HENDRICKS, REPUBLICAN STAFF DIRECTOR AND GENERAL COUNSEL

February 5, 2013

The Honorable Patrick D. Gallagher
Under Secretary for Standards and Technology
United States Department of Commerce
National Institute of Standards and Technology
100 Bureau Drive, Stop 1000
Gaithersburg, MD 20899

Dear Under Secretary Gallagher,

After reviewing a series of exhaustive financial audits that your agency and the Department of Commerce Inspector General have prepared over the past few years, I have opened an investigation into TimeWise Management Systems, a private company that provides services to a number of Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) centers. Attached to this letter is a letter I have sent today to the president of TimeWise that discusses some of the troubling information presented in the audits and requests more information about the company's financial relationships with MEP centers.

The MEP program is one of the federal government's most important initiatives to transfer innovative technology and management practices to small and medium-sized manufacturers in the United States. I am a strong supporter of the MEP program and its mission to increase the productivity of our manufacturers and create jobs for the U.S. economy. As chairman of the Senate Committee with jurisdiction over the MEP program, I have a duty to make sure that the federal taxpayer dollars authorized for MEP are spent carefully and in accordance with the law. We cannot afford to waste any of the precious taxpayer dollars the federal government invests in strengthening our manufacturing sector.

In order to help me understand how the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) evaluates annual budgets submitted by MEP centers and how NIST approves and processes payments to MEP centers, I request that you provide the following to the Commerce Committee:

1. A detailed written statement of the results of the agency review NIST has been conducting into the Florida, Maine, and Massachusetts MEP centers since September 2011;
2. A briefing to Commerce Committee staff on the results of this agency review;

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3. All documents and analyses NIST has collected or generated while conducting the agency review into the Florida, Maine, and Massachusetts MEP centers since September 2011.

Please provide this information and briefing by Friday, March 1, 2013. The Committee is making these requests under the authority of Senate Rules XXV and XXVI. If you have any questions, please contact Jeffrey Zubricki or Ann Zulkosky with the Committee staff at (202) 224-1300.

Sincerely,



John D. Rockefeller IV
Chairman

Enclosure

cc: John Thune
Ranking Member