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U.S. Senate Provides \$110 million to MEP

Washington, D.C. (June 20, 2008) – Yesterday, the Senate Appropriations Committee marked up its Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies appropriations bill which provided \$110 million in federal funding for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) program for fiscal year 2009. The level was increased from its subcommittee mark of \$106 million in an amendment offered by Senator Kohl.

“The Manufacturing Extension Partnership program has a proven record of strengthening the vitality and productivity of small- and medium-sized manufacturers, helping them remain strong employers,” said Kohl, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee. “I am pleased that we were able to boost resources for this program that has helped businesses grow and has kept good paying jobs in the United States since its inception. In my state of Wisconsin, the MEP has successfully created or saved 8,000 jobs over the last five years. With this increase in federal funding, it will continue to have a positive impact on job security and our economy.”

The amendment was supported by Senators Olympia J. Snowe (R-Maine) and Joe Lieberman (I-Conn.) on behalf of the Senate Task Force on Manufacturing. The Task Force sponsored the March request letter to Senate Appropriators signed by 58 Senators requesting the authorized \$122 million for MEP in fiscal year 2009. “The MEP is absolutely critical to the health of our nation’s manufacturing sector, particularly during the challenging economic times currently facing the nation,” said Senator Snowe, Co-Chair of the Senate Task Force on Manufacturing and Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship. “Our economy could greatly benefit from the increased productivity and job creation that results from the services provided by the MEP to our nation’s small-and medium-sized manufacturers. The Senate Task Force on Manufacturing has long led initiatives to secure MEP funding and will continue to fight for increased appropriations.”

“At a time when America’s small businesses are facing stiff challenges in an increasingly competitive global economy, the Manufacturing Extension Partnership helps provide our firms with tools they need to grow and prosper. I applaud the actions taken by the Appropriations Committee, and I will also continue to push my colleagues to support this and other efforts to help American manufacturers,” said Senator Lieberman, Co-Chair of the Senate Task Force on Manufacturing.

“On behalf of the MEP Centers nationwide, we are thankful for the efforts of Senator Kohl and the Senate Appropriations Committee for including \$110 million for MEP. Although it is not the authorized level, it is a step in the right direction for program

stability and growth in the future,” states Mike Coast, Chairman of the American Small Manufacturers Coalition (ASMC) and President of Michigan’s NIST MEP affiliate.

ASMC, the trade association of NIST MEP Centers, has advocated for Congressional support of the program through its members and manufacturing clients. MEP is a network of 59 centers across all 50 states and Puerto Rico, with over 350 locations across the country, providing technical assistance and business support services to America’s smaller manufacturers. An independent survey of 4,959 clients served by the program in federal fiscal year 2006 found that MEP clients attributed more than \$1.115 billion in cost savings to the program’s assistance, as well as crediting its services with creating or retaining \$6.76 billion in sales. The program also helped manufacturers to create or retain a reported 52,585 jobs and to increase investment by \$1.65 billion.