

Rep. Luján Discusses Potential Benefits of Clean Energy Economy for Hispanic Businesses

Washington, DC – Today, Rep. Ben Ray Luján delivered a speech to the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce’s 19th annual legislative conference. Rep. Luján discussed the difficulties and uncertainty facing small businesses. He encouraged innovation with a focus on green jobs and renewable energy to get our economy back on track and create jobs for businesses across the country.

“I know many of you are using all of your resourcefulness and creativity every single day to keep your doors open, to help other Hispanic owned businesses, and to create economic opportunity in your communities,” said Rep. Luján. “At this time of uncertainty, we must work together to help foster a fertile environment to promote growth and success.”

Rep. Luján joins many distinguished speakers who will speak at the three day legislative conference, including President Barack Obama and other elected leaders and advocates.

“I look forward to hearing from President Obama about the role Hispanic-owned businesses will play in getting our economy back on track,” said Rep. Luján. “President Obama has promoted plans to double renewable energy production and expand a clean energy economy. His participation in this conference signals the importance of Hispanic participation in these plans.”

The Hispanic Chamber of Commerce was established in 1979 by several dedicated Hispanic leaders. The USHCC has worked towards bringing the issues and concerns of the nation's more than 2.5 million Hispanic-owned businesses to the forefront of the national economic agenda.

FULL TEXT AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

Thank you for inviting me to speak at the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce's 19th annual legislative conference.

We are meeting at a difficult time in our nation's history – a difficult time for small businesses and a difficult time for the many families and communities across the country.

In my home state of New Mexico – and in many of the towns and cities in my district – Hispanic-owned businesses are struggling. And the uncertain future of our economy is causing many sleepless nights for small business owners and families across our country.

Hispanic-owned businesses have already faced many daunting disadvantages that have only been aggravated by our current economic crisis. For the Hispanic business community, our economic crisis comes at an especially difficult time.

Many Hispanic businesses were only beginning to get an economic footing – as they grew rapidly to respond to the increased Hispanic population and increased Hispanic influence. The economic crisis threatens to stunt many Hispanic businesses well before they are matured and perhaps fully ready to weather tougher times.

I know many of you are using all of your resourcefulness and creativity every single day to keep your doors open, to help other Hispanic-owned businesses, and to create economic opportunity in your communities. At this time of uncertainty, we must work together to help foster a fertile environment to promote growth and success. Many problems are affecting your day to day operations– dried up credit, limited access to capital, aging infrastructure, limited access to affordable health care, and the need for a prepared 21st century workforce.

And although we are facing tough times, we must not forget there are also great opportunities, that through perseverance and innovation, we can get the economy moving in the right direction, but only if we work together.

For example, President Obama recently signed the largest investment in clean, renewable energy in history. It invests in new electric grids, new wind turbines, new solar panels, and cleaner cars. It includes language to promote green jobs—jobs that can help ensure the future of our economy and our planet. Hispanic-owned business must be a part of the green jobs movement. They must be able to use this investment to grow a renewable energy industry in their communities. Entrepreneurs must benefit from our new green economy—because when Hispanic businesses do well, our country does well.

We need innovation, courage and a commitment to develop and improve clean energy technology more now than ever before. As a member of the Committee on Science and Technology, I am committed to maintaining the high standard of innovation that has helped generations of Americans succeed. Now, our ability to get our country back on track relies on our ability to change the way our country generates and uses energy, and on our ability to spur small business development and activity through opportunities like technology transfer and innovation. You must not only be a key part of the discussion about innovation and the technology for the future, you must be at the forefront.

I look forward to working with your organization. We are at a crucial time in our nation's history, but because we are committed to working together for the betterment of our communities and our country, because we are committed to improving education and job training, committed to addressing our nation's health care needs, and committed to creating jobs and embracing innovation--I know that we, together, will get our economy and nation back on track.

Thank you for having me.