

September 18, 2009

WASHINGTON – In a letter sent this week to the chairman of the General Electric Company, the **New Mexico Congressional Delegation** urged the company to reverse its decision to close GE’s Albuquerque aviation plant next year, and offered to partner with local, state, and company officials in developing creative ways to retain its 400-member workforce – including possible expansion into green energy manufacturing.

The letter, mailed Thursday to GE Chief Executive Jeffrey Immelt, was signed by all five members of New Mexico’s delegation: Sens. Jeff Bingaman and Tom Udall, and Congressmen Martin Heinrich (NM-1), Ben Ray Luján (NM-3) and Harry Teague (NM-2).

“New Mexico and our congressional delegation are prepared to partner with you to retain the current workforce in Albuquerque and work with you to grow these numbers through diversifying the product lines manufactured in New Mexico,” the letter stated.

General Electric announced earlier this summer plans to close its Albuquerque plant, which has manufactured equipment for jet engines since the late 1960s, by the third quarter of 2010. At

the time, the company cited the weak economy and reduced product demand as reasons for the closure.

In their letter to GE, the New Mexico delegation acknowledged reports that retaining the plant's operation would require significant facility upgrades, and urged GE to give the potential investment serious consideration in consultation with all vested stakeholders.

The delegation also encouraged GE to expand its vision for the Albuquerque plant to include the company's green energy manufacturing business – noting that New Mexico is continuing to experience growth in the renewable energy sector of its economy, particularly with solar and bio-fuel companies.

“Having a plant in the Albuquerque area that produces a renewable energy product would create high skill jobs and reinforce your commitment to rebuilding our nation's industrial base,” the letter stated.

The delegation also urged the fair treatment of current GE plant employees, particularly regarding wages and benefits.

“These employees have been asked to make draconian sacrifices in both wages and benefits, seemingly putting them at levels far below workers at GE plants elsewhere in the country. This does not seem reasonable,” the letter stated. “We urge GE to be creative in looking at ways to keep the plant open, and to be fair to current employees who have been loyal to the company and productive members of GE’s manufacturing team.”

Below is the text from the Delegation’s letter to the CEO of General Electric Company:

Mr. Jeffrey Immelt

Chairman, CEO

General Electric Company

3135 Easton Turnpike Fairfield, CT 06828-0001

Dear Mr. Immelt:

Maintaining and rebuilding our industrial base and investing in high skill jobs are goals we share. In New Mexico, we are working hard to create a new economy that includes renewable energy, and we are experiencing growth in this new sector, specifically with solar and bio-fuel companies. However, we still need to retain traditional high value manufacturing jobs, like those represented at your aviation plant, to be part of the state's portfolio. GE's tenure in New Mexico is valued and the 400 skilled jobs at the plant are an important part of the Albuquerque economy.

Accordingly, the news of GE's plans to close the aviation plant and relocate the jobs elsewhere has been most unwelcome news. We have heard that retaining the plant's operation in Albuquerque would require a significant investment to upgrade the Albuquerque plant to a sustainable level of productivity. We believe such an investment deserves serious consideration from all vested stakeholders, including city, county, state and federal entities, as well as GE, its workers and their representatives.

A shared investment from all stakeholders would seem to be a likely strategy for keeping these jobs in New Mexico, and we understand the local workers are quite willing to negotiate in good faith meaningful contributions to such a shared investment. Having said that, we also understand these employees have been asked to make draconian sacrifices in both wages and benefits, seemingly putting them at levels far below workers at GE plants elsewhere in the country. This does not seem to be reasonable.

We urge GE to be creative in looking at ways to keep the plant open, and to be fair to current employees who have been loyal to the company and productive members of GE's manufacturing team.

We also ask you to look at Albuquerque as a location for GE's green energy manufacturing business. Having a plant in the Albuquerque area that produces a renewable energy product would create high skill jobs and reinforce your commitment of rebuilding our nation's industrial base.

New Mexico and our congressional delegation are prepared to partner with you to retain the current workforce in Albuquerque and work with you to grow these numbers through diversifying the product lines manufactured in New Mexico. Our state fully intends to become a leader in renewable energy production in the U.S. and we would like your company to participate in that endeavor.

We look forward to discussing with you this urgent and time-sensitive matter.

Sincerely,

