

Monday, October 31, 2011

Santa Fe, NM – Congressman Ben Ray Luján of New Mexico's Third District applauded the Obama Administration's latest effort to spur job creation and strengthen the global competitiveness of America's businesses. On Friday, the President directed federal agencies with research laboratories to increase the rate of technology transfer from laboratories to the commercial marketplace and to accelerate the economic and societal impact from federal research and development investments.

"In order to enhance our nation's competitiveness we need to make better use of our federal research and development investments," Congressman Luján said. "Our federal laboratories are tremendous resources for new technologies that can become new commercial products and sustain new business ventures. With his recent announcement, it is clear the President understands the important role that partnerships between our labs and businesses can play in the effort to get our economy moving again and put people back to work."

The President's directive has three main components:

- It directs agencies to streamline and accelerate the process for licensing laboratory technologies and for establishing private-public research partnerships known as Cooperative Research and Development Agreements (CRADAs).
- It directs agencies to enhance local and regional partnerships by participating in regional technology innovation clusters, locating applied research and business support programs – such as incubators and research parks – on or near federal laboratories, and expanding commercialization activities in each laboratory's local region.
- It will institute more accountability by directing agencies to develop a five-year plan with concrete goals and metrics to measure progress, including keeping track of how many new commercial products and successful self-sustaining companies were created. It also encourages federal agencies to include technology transfer metrics in overall laboratory performance evaluation.

Congressman Luján has been highlighting the potential benefits of technology transfer during his time in Congress. At the beginning of the year, he started the Congressional Technology Transfer Caucus along with co-chair Representative Frank Wolf of Virginia. He has also

authored bills to enhance private-public partnerships through CRADAs in order to help move technologies from the basic research and development stage to a more mature state in which they will be more attractive to the private sector.

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