

Wednesday, November 28, 2012

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Ben Ray Luján of New Mexico's Third District and Co-Chair of the Congressional Technology Caucus highlighted the Department of Energy's (DOE) response to [President Obama's Executive Memo](#) on accelerating technology transfer and the commercialization of federal research in support of high-growth businesses.

In October of 2011, President Obama directed the heads of executive departments and agencies with research laboratories to increase the rate of technology transfer from laboratories to the commercial marketplace and to accelerate the economic impact from federal research and development investments.

In response to the President's memo, Luján sent a letter to Department of Energy Secretary Steven Chu recommending actions for DOE to consider when addressing the President's [directive](#) [Luján Letter to Secretary Chu](#)

“Our national labs across the country, including Los Alamos and Sandia, are making important strides in a number of key sectors from health care to clean energy,” Congressman Luján said. “Helping local businesses move these innovations from the laboratory to the marketplace will spur economic development that creates jobs in our communities. I am encouraged that Secretary Chu's response to President Obama's call to encourage technology transfer includes a number of recommendations that I highlighted with the Secretary that can help increase our economic competitiveness.”

Luján's recommendations that were included in [DOE's plan](#) are:

- Including technology transfer and commercialization metrics as part of each DOE laboratory's yearly performance evaluation plan in order to communicate performance expectations.
- Including laboratory employees' technology transfer activities in their performance and promotion evaluations to incentivize and reward employees for prioritizing such activities.
- Fostering local and regional partnerships that can multiply the technology transfer and

commercialization activities associated with a given laboratory.

These recommendations were aimed at accomplishing the three main components of the President's directive:

- Streamlining and accelerating the process for licensing laboratory technologies and for establishing private-public research partnerships known as Cooperative Research and Development Agreements (CRADAs).
- Enhancing 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.
- Instituting 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.

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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