

Jay Timmons' Remarks to the 2015 Manufacturing Summit (Washington, D.C.)

Thank you again to Secretary Pritzker for joining us today, for always making time for manufacturers and for taking our questions about these important issues.

I want to take another moment to thank NAM Executive Committee member Tom Handley, president and chief operating officer of Ecolab, for his strong commitment to the NAM and manufacturing in the United States. The generous support Ecolab has provided as the presenting sponsor is invaluable and helped build the foundation for a successful Summit.

And thank you for your incredible dedication and outstanding support of the NAM.

From hosting meetings with legislators on your shop floors in their districts and passionately testifying before congressional committees, from rallying to drum up support for vital legislation and cascading our action alerts to your colleagues, friends and employees, for every commitment you make, thank you for your active involvement in forging relationships and strengthening partnerships in Washington that allow us to be in a position these days to bring about significant results.

Thank you for recognizing the importance of, and devoting so much time for, our Summit. Whether you flew in from a thousand miles away, or drove in from several miles away, which could actually take longer to travel some days, I appreciate you personally volunteering to help us move the needle and get Washington working for all manufacturers in America.

The distance between Washington as it is and the Washington we need still stretches beyond the horizon.

When we spend excessive amounts of time, and massive resources, convincing, cajoling and persuading lawmakers to open pathways to more than 95 percent of customers outside our borders ... or to preserve, for the long term, export financing that more than 60 of our foreign competitors provide to businesses, it's clear there's a lot to change.

When uncertainty persists because lawmakers chose patches over solutions, stifling economic growth, job creation and investment in our future, it's apparent we must take charge.

When politicians resort to populist rhetoric or positions because they perceive that's what voters want to hear or see, it's obvious we must amplify more of our voices.

When elected officials allow those principles to diminish, which empowered our nation to become the most prosperous, free and benevolent in history—free enterprise, competitiveness, individual liberty and equal opportunity—it's evident we must do more.

Ladies and gentlemen, I understand the frustration with Washington.

Today, manufacturers are creating more jobs, making more products and making them better than ever before. For the first time ever, manufacturing contributes more than \$2 trillion to the American economy—one of every eight dollars in our economy.

Manufacturing continues to have the biggest multiplier effect of any industry. A single manufacturing job can lead to the creation of three to five more jobs in other industries.

Manufacturers are leading our country in ways that were unthinkable generations ago.

Over the past several decades, manufacturers' innovation and commitment to reducing emissions has produced major declines in the nation's ozone levels, all while expanding industrial and commercial production.

We are inventing. We are investing. We are training. We are hiring. We are producing. We are delivering for America.

And Washington hasn't done enough for far too long. Despite our progress, our nation has fallen behind by standing still—on trade, on tax policy, on infrastructure, on regulatory reform.

But here and now—during this Summit—we have a great opportunity to turn the tide. Legislation—on many of our priorities—is moving on Capitol Hill. And, when you visit congressional offices in a few short minutes, you can be the difference between success and failure.

We have to seize this moment of opportunity. We can't let it slip away.

Your personal appeals explaining the importance of trade, including how it relates to the number of people you employ, can push the House to pass Trade Promotion Authority and send it to the President's desk. It can also push Congress to secure a long-term reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank—and make it clear that America is “Open for Business.”

By discussing ways our tax system inhibits your growth and harms your competitiveness, we'll make strides toward comprehensive tax reform and obtaining a permanent R&D credit.

No one is better positioned than you to explain the urgent need for a multiyear surface transportation authorization—to reclaim the world-beating, pioneering tradition that will drive sustained prosperity for everyone.

And when it comes to regulations, whether it's unwise and unduly costly ozone, greenhouse gas and “Waters of the United States” regulations, the National Labor Relations Board's “ambush elections” rule or trying to regulate the Internet with an 80-year-old law that will curtail investment and innovation that benefits manufacturers—your firsthand accounts can turn back bad policy and promote decisions that will grow our economy and lead to more jobs.

Ladies and gentlemen, with this army, it's time to renew that vision of America that secures our mantle of global economic leadership, with the lens of ideals that make us unique and still the envy of the world. That's why today we're unveiling our Vision for the future of manufacturing and American Exceptionalism, which you found on your chairs this morning. It's a straightforward plan—for Congress and the Administration—with an outsized impact if Washington helps us realize our promise.

A promise that lies in four goals:

First, the United States will be the best place in the world to manufacture and attract foreign direct investment.

Second, manufacturers in America will be the world's leading innovators.

Third, the United States will expand access to global markets to enable manufacturers to reach the 95 percent of consumers who live outside our borders.

Fourth, manufacturers will have access to the workforce that a modern economy demands.

The work of meeting these ends continues at this hour.

We are reaffirming that, in this great country, we never settle for the way things are but find ways—always striving—to chart a better course.

Like a young, innovative farmer in Sheffield, Iowa, who 50 years ago went into a welding shop with an idea that didn't just make his work easier but transformed his community—and puts about 600 people to work today.

Like machinists in Louisville, Kentucky, back in 1907, who set out to manufacture elevators and related equipment and ignited a business that would employ 200 people in four locations in the Midwest region.

Like a German immigrant chemist, who, after bravely serving our country for five years during World War II, came to Albany, Georgia, took a risk and built a business, which, three generations later and still in the family, generates over 1,200 products with worldwide distribution.

Like you—through the work you do every day, by your dedication to manufacturing in the United States, by your willingness to come from across the nation to meet your representatives here.

Now we must go out—to ensure that policymakers hear our voices and act to strengthen manufacturing and our nation's future. To give us the tools we need to compete in the 21st-century economy. To make our tomorrow better than our today.

That is our obligation to the next generation—and it's an obligation we must and will fulfill.

On behalf of our over 14,000 member companies, our over 12 million employees, the millions who rely on our industry and who don't even know you're working for them and future generations of Americans, like my two daughters, thank you for standing up, standing tall and storming the Hill.

Thank you.