

**GOVERNOR GARY F. LOCKE**  
**OPENING STATEMENT TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE**  
**ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Wednesday, March 18, 2009

Chairman Rockefeller, it is with a great sense of honor and humility that I come before you and the members of this committee today. I want to extend my personal thanks to you and to the distinguished Ranking Member Kay Bailey Hutchison, for the courtesies you have shown me. It has been just three short weeks since President Obama nominated me to be Secretary of Commerce and I appreciate the urgency with which you have moved this confirmation process.

Over the past few weeks, I have had the opportunity to meet with members of this committee to discuss the need for a vibrant Department of Commerce that aggressively promotes American products, services and ideas both at home and around the world. We share a common vision for this Department to be an engine for job growth and economic renewal. I look forward to working with all of the Committee members, if confirmed.

I am particularly grateful to my two Senators – Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell – for their introductions. I have benefited from the sage wisdom of Senator Murray for many years and had the privilege of serving with Senator Cantwell when we were in the state legislature together. The people of Washington are proud to have two such able leaders representing us in the U.S. Senate.

The honor of appearing before you today is compounded by the presence of one of my mentors, Chairman Daniel Inouye of Hawai'i. Generations of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders who choose to enter politics have him to thank for blazing the trail for all of us. Senator, you are a great role model and I offer you my most profound "Mahalo."

I'd like to introduce the members of this committee to my wife Mona who joins me today. As First Lady for the State of Washington, she spent eight years advocating for issues relating to children and families. She continues her advocacy to this day as Executive Director of the Susan G. Komen for the Cure's Puget Sound affiliate, where she has been a leading voice in the fight to cure breast cancer.

My children Emily, Dylan and Madeline cannot be here today, but like all of the Locke family, they are very much a part of these hearings. You see, I am the son and the grandson of immigrants. My family's history in this country dates back more than a century when my grandfather emigrated from China to Olympia, Washington. He got a job as a "house boy" for a family whose home still stands, just one mile from the Governor's mansion. During my tenure as Governor, it was never lost on me that it took my family 100 years to travel that one mile.

That journey – like the journeys of so many immigrant families – was possible because of the opportunities we were afforded in this land.

- My grandfather received an education because his employers chose to teach him.
- My father, who fought for our country on the beaches of Normandy, was able to come home from the war and support his family through his grocery store because of the value this country places on entrepreneurship.
- And I was able to become the first Asian American governor on the mainland because of the sons and daughters of Italian and Russian immigrants and African Americans who had been elected to represent Washington State before me. They didn't just make history for themselves and their communities. They opened doors of possibility for all of us.

My family's story – and the stories of all those other families – is embedded in the values that make America great. And it is precisely those values that lead me to come before you today seeking your confirmation to be the nation's 36<sup>th</sup> Secretary of Commerce.

My goal is simple: to carry out the President's plan for economic recovery by putting every part of the Department of Commerce single-mindedly to work on saving American jobs and creating the jobs of the future.

The Department of Commerce touches ordinary American citizens in ways obvious and obscure every day – from the weather satellites of NOAA to the global offices of the International Trade Administration and from the laboratories of National Institute of Standards and Technology to the many communities that benefit from Economic Development Agency grants.

Next year, in the conduct of the decennial Census, more than 1.2 million temporary Commerce employees will fan out across the country to provide a full, accurate and physical count of the American people. Mr. Chairman, as you know, I'm a stickler for accuracy. The Census only happens once every ten years and we need to get it right – no exceptions, no excuses. That is why it will be run out of the Department of Commerce and by a Director who will work with the Congress, the Administration and our state and local leaders to make sure you and they are involved every step of the way in making this a successful count.

We meet at a time of great challenges for the Department. The ongoing transition to digital television, the looming 2010 Census and the critical role the Department will play in the economic recovery – all create a sense of urgency. I think urgency is a good thing because it lets the people at the Department of Commerce know that their work has never been more important and that we must solve the immediate challenges we face.

At the same time, I want to make sure we don't allow the urgent to crowd out the important.

- Setting a foundation for long-term economic growth and job creation is important.
- Improving weather forecasting is important.
- Managing our fishing industry responsibly is important.
- Reducing the backlog of patent applications is important.

We must look over the horizon and prepare for the new economy that will emerge when this recession passes. Simply put, we must re-build, re-tool and re-invent our national strategies for sustained economic success. The Department of Commerce, as the President has noted many times, must be able to do multiple things at once.

I believe we can.

When the high tech bubble hit Washington State, we pressed forward with a series of smart policy initiatives that set us up for future growth and created incentives to drive economic expansion. And we set a laser focus on attracting and developing the next generation of innovative and emerging industries. We came out of that period stronger, healthier, and better prepared to embrace economic change. That is the kind of leadership I hope to bring to the Department of Commerce.

Already, the Department holds key tools our nation needs

- To lead the world in innovation, science and technology,
- To boost exports by promoting American products and working with American businesses,
- To ensure the health of our oceans and combat climate change,
- To create new, energy-efficient businesses and green jobs, and
- To strengthen our ability to compete in a global economy.

Now, these tools, which have been too long ignored and fragmented, must become effective solutions to implement the President's vision of job growth and economic renewal.

Mr. Chairman, as you and the members of this Committee know, I started my political career as a legislator. I felt then, as I later did as Governor, that government works best when there is a true and open partnership between the executive and legislative branches. Should this Committee confirm my nomination, I pledge that as Secretary, I will follow a collaborative path to inform, cooperate with and seek advice from this Committee.

We can create public-private partnerships that bring together businesses, other federal agencies, state and local governments, universities, and community-based organizations. Together we will come up with innovative solutions to:

- Create jobs that are made in America and stay in America,
- Foster entrepreneurship and growth across all sectors of the economy,

- Deliver broadband to communities far and wide,
- Support innovation through cutting-edge, honest science,
- Protect our global ecosystem, and
- Reduce our federal trade deficit by positioning the United States as a world leader in exports.

I hail from the “other Washington” where trade is the lifeblood of our economy. We are the most trade dependent state in the nation with more than one in four jobs in our state either directly or indirectly tied to trade. There has never been a more important time for this country to have strong trade partnerships around the world – partnerships that protect our national interests while opening the doors of prosperity to American business. As a Governor and an attorney, I have worked hard to open markets in Asia to American businesses.

More than free trade, though, I believe in fair trade. That means we must enforce our trade agreements and place a high value on environmental, labor and safety standards. As a former prosecutor, I believe in enforcing the law. It is pointless to negotiate complex trade agreements if we don’t intend to enforce them. If I am confirmed for this position, I will.

The success of the Department of Commerce has never been more important to the success of the United States. It is my hope that, in years to come, the constituents and workers will come to think of this as the Department of Commerce and Innovation. Sustained and sustainable economic success is dependent on America maintaining its global leadership in innovation. Innovation drives productivity and collaboration; it allows mature companies to do better and new businesses to be formed. It offers opportunities for workers to use new skills in creative ways. It sustains communities as they create their own competitiveness strategies. I intend to integrate the work of the Department of Commerce towards a strategy of knowledge, innovation and sustainable economic growth.

Together, we will energize the Department of Commerce. We will include the American people in rebuilding the economy. And we will say to the world, as clearly as possible, that America is open for business, once again.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you again for the opportunity to address this Committee. I look forward to your questions.