



Remarks Prepared for Delivery by

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Economic Task Force for the DHL Hub

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Introduction

Good afternoon. I'm pleased to be with you today along with my colleagues from the Small Business Administration and the Economic Development Administration. While we meet at a time of the holidays, where we are focused on family, friends, and peace, I understand this is an exceptionally difficult time for this entire community.

This is my third visit to the region in recent months. As in previous visits, I have spent time with your Mayor, David Raizk. Mr. Mayor, you have, perhaps, one of the toughest jobs in government today. You have been dealt a hand that you certainly could not have envisioned when you took the oath of office and a situation with no easy answers. The people of this region have looked to you, and you have provided strong leadership in a time of uncertainty. The people have faith in you, and from my visits with you, I believe that faith is well placed.

When a challenge the size of yours comes along, it will take a partnership to see it through to the other side – local, state, and federal government all have a role play. On the federal side, I can report to you that it has been a bipartisan effort.

I understand Senator Brown was with you earlier today. The Senator and I have discussed the situation in Wilmington both in person and on the phone. Not too long ago, I met with both Senators Brown and Voinovich. Now, when a Federal agency heads meets with two Senators at the same time, it either means you are in big trouble, or the issue is critically important. Wilmington is a critical issue.

In addition to the leadership of Senators Brown and Voinovich, I want to acknowledge the leadership and commitment of Congressman Mike Turner. Congressman Turner and I have traveled this region together, have convened meetings and marshaled resources here in Wilmington, and just the other day, in the Red Room of the White House, the Congressman and I had a long conversation focused on the challenges facing Wilmington.

You have strong advocates in Washington – in both the House and Senate – and men of both parties.

I also want to say that even though my time as part of the current Administration is rapidly coming to a close, I have fully briefed the President Elect's Transition Team on the situation here in Wilmington. We are working very well together and they will be ready to hit the ground running in January. I am confident that,

once in place, the new Administration will continue to look for ways to be helpful to this region.

The Economic Situation

Let me state clearly that this region faces an unprecedented challenge – there is no sugar coating it. There is nothing that I can say or do that will make the very real economic pain go away. The two agencies represented here today are fairly small ones and we do not come here with buckets of money or magical solutions. But it was important for us to be here to ensure we are doing everything we can, and listen to your ideas and take them back to Washington.

Given the significance of the challenge this region faces, it is tempting to look to someone to blame. But really, nobody did anything wrong. Certainly, the town did not do anything wrong – just provided a great facility for a company to come in and provide a quality service and lots of good jobs. The governments didn't do anything wrong. And while we all wish the company were to be able to remain in business, we all know that businesses starting and failing are part of the business cycle.

The question is where do we go from here? Let me say that while government at all levels can and will do what they can to help, at the end of the day, the

leadership, the ideas, the initiatives that will chart the path to economic recovery, will come from this community – from the people and leaders in this room today. Knowing the people and the spirit of this community, you will recover. It will take hard work and you will see tough days ahead, but there is a brighter day ahead for Wilmington and Clinton County.

SBA Services

As for the Small Business Administration, we provided funds for a new Small Business Development Center in Wilmington that opened in October. At this Center, existing businesses and entrepreneurs wanting to start a business have ready access to professional business counseling services.

In addition, SBA has assigned an additional staff person from our Cincinnati office to spend time with the businesses here in Wilmington on a regular basis.

Finally, SBA's renowned SCORE organization – retired business executives who volunteer their time as business counselors – will be bolstered in the Wilmington area.

Will these tools resolve the challenges you face; no. But they will help. The actions of SBA, EDA, the Department of Labor – which has provided the State of

Ohio with \$3.9 million in emergency funds to help address this crisis – and the assistance of other government entities – will help you chart a path to a brighter day.

Closing

It is now my pleasure to introduce my Commerce colleague, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce Matt Crow, who will describe the actions taken by the Economic Development Administration. Matt...