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**EX-IM BANK, SBA BROADEN CO-GUARANTEE PROGRAM
TO HELP SMALL BUSINESSES OBTAIN LARGER WORKING CAPITAL LOANS**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -The Export-Import Bank of the United States (Ex-Im Bank) and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) have signed an agreement to widen the reach of, and make permanent, a cooperative program that enables U.S. small businesses to sell their products and services in foreign markets.

Ex-Im Bank Chairman and President James H. Lambright and SBA Administrator Steven C. Preston signed a memorandum of understanding at Ex-Im Bank headquarters expanding the two agencies' Co-Guarantee Program for five years, and increasing Ex-Im Bank's potential exposure at any one time under the program to \$50 million. Previously the initiative, launched as a pilot program in 2004, was limited to a total amount of \$45 million during the 2-year test.

The program allows Ex-Im Bank and SBA to co-guarantee loans of up to \$2 million to small business exporters under SBA's Export Working Capital Program. Ex-Im Bank's co-guarantee supplements SBA's guarantee to help small business exporters obtain larger loans than SBA could support alone. Borrowers still are able to work through their existing SBA lenders. Small businesses from Florida to Wisconsin have benefited from the program.

"We are delighted that this program will give even more help to those small businesses that need more capital than they could obtain under the SBA's program alone," Lambright said. "The program helps Ex-Im Bank fulfill its mission to support U.S. small business exports and American jobs, and answers the Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee's (TPCC) call for Ex-Im Bank and SBA to bring their working capital programs into line to leverage support for small business."

The TPCC is an interagency task force chaired by the Secretary of Commerce charged with implementing a national export strategy to streamline the U.S. government's export promotion and trade finance services.

"The SBA is proud to be a partner with the Ex-Im Bank to back larger loans to small businesses," said SBA Administrator Steven C. Preston. "This initiative allows entrepreneurs a bigger piece of the pie as they enter the global economy in a 21st century marketplace that does not recognize borders."

The SBA U.S. Export Assistance Centers, located in major metropolitan areas throughout the United States, are one-stop shops ready to provide your small or medium-sized business with local export assistance. For more information please visit www.sba.gov/international.

Ex-Im Bank this year marks its 72nd year of helping finance the sale of U.S. exports, primarily to emerging markets throughout the world. In fiscal year 2005 Ex-Im Bank authorized nearly \$14 billion in transactions supporting almost \$17.9 billion in U.S. exports. This represented 3,128 transactions, of which 2,617, or over 80%, directly benefited small businesses.