Co-Chairs Woods and Gomberg, members of the committee,

I'm Rick Evans, Executive Director of the Government Contract Assistance Program, Oregon's Apex Accelerator, also known as the Procurement Technical Assistance Program (PTACs). I have been GCAP's program manager since its inception. GCAP has been continuously funded by the U.S. Department of Defense, currently at 65% federal, requiring a 35% non-federal match, which, since 1989 has been provided by the State of Oregon. GCAP's federal appropriation has received strong support from Oregon's congressional delegation.

The mission of the Apex Accelerator, the DOD's new national brand, is to assist Oregon companies entering the public contracting market, or are already contracting with local, State or Federal agencies. Assistance includes helping businesses find opportunities and helping them with appropriate certifications, like Women-Owed, Minority-owned, or Emerging Small Business. We also help prepare Oregon businesses to understand Requests for Proposals, to create winning proposals, to properly invoice, and to elevate their businesses in the eyes of the public agencies.

We have eleven highly experienced procurement counselors located throughout the state. We also help train counselors within the Hispanic Metro Chamber, and the Professional Business Development Group, serving minority-owned or disadvantaged construction firms, as well as the Pacific Northwest Defense Coalition.

Over the past two years, we have counseled over 1,800 Oregon businesses, resulting in about $150 million dollars in contracts.

This Winter, the GCAP team helped over 350 businesses with the Virtual Incident Procurement process or VIPR, which is what the Forest Service, the BLM and the Oregon Department of Forestry use to procure resources for fighting wildland forest fires: truck drivers, , timber fallers Engines, Chippers, Water Trucks, Excavators, and much more. The VIPR process has many difficult steps, and in recent years GCAP-assisted businesses have earned millions of dollars while playing major roles in the wildfire suppression efforts.