

SANDY ADAMS
24TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY,
COMPETITION, AND THE INTERNET

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIME, TERRORISM,
AND HOMELAND SECURITY

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE,
AND TECHNOLOGY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS AND
OVERSIGHT

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SPACE AND
AERONAUTICS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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216 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-2706

DISTRICT OFFICES:
2461 WEST SR 426
SUITE 1041
OVIEDO, FL 32765
(407) 977-7601

1000 CITY CENTER CIRCLE
2ND FLOOR
PORT ORANGE, FL 32129
(386) 756-9798

Chairman Darrell Issa
House Oversight and Government Reform Committee
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman Issa,

I am writing to you today about a situation at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) that has given me great cause for concern. I have recently obtained information demonstrating that the NIST Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) has been spending egregiously on lavish resorts and conferences that seem to bear very little obvious benefits to the taxpayer.

The stated purpose of MEP is to improve the productivity and technological performance of U.S. Manufacturing for small to medium sized companies, and there is a competitive grant process in place with a matching program designed to maximize monies put into any of the 60 extension centers around the country. As you know, the most recent appropriation for MEP was \$128 million, which is an increase of \$22 million from the appropriations received in 2005. While the appropriation for this program continues to grow, the accountability for their spending seems to have become disproportionately relaxed.

According to the information I have received, NIST MEP most recently spent anywhere between three and five million dollars on an annual conference at a resort near Walt Disney World in Florida. The stated purpose of this conference was to, "Bring together the voice of manufacturing and the voice of government into an open, educational, and sharing environment." I am deeply concerned that it appears as if this event and the other regional quarterly conferences that are held around the country oftentimes involve spending taxpayer dollars irresponsibly on lavish resorts, expensive meals, and golf outings.

The American people have a right to know exactly how their tax dollars are being spent, and they are rightly outraged by the egregious abuse they have recently seen on these types of ridiculous conferences. Certainly, we can all agree that spending the hard earned tax dollars of the American people on golf outings and elaborate dinners at fancy resorts while people are struggling to put food on the table is a gross abuse of the public trust.

Therefore, I respectfully request that the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform hold a hearing in conjunction with the House Science, Space, and Technology Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight as soon as is practical on these conferences. It is imperative that we ensure there are no abuses like those recently uncovered at the General Services Administration earlier this year. If those abuses do exist at NIST, it is incumbent upon us to hold the leadership of NIST accountable. I will be forwarding the evidence that I have collected as well as contacts that committee investigators should find helpful.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,



Sandy Adams
Member of Congress