

Male Unknown Speaker - Ladies and Gentlemen please welcome to the podium The Honorable Stephen Benjamin, Senior Advisor to the President and Director of the White House Office of Public Engagement.

Stephen Benjamin - All right thank you so much it's great to be with all of you this afternoon um I'm Stephen Benjamin I'm senior advisor of the president and director of The Office of Public engagement at the White House it's an honor to be with you uh this is a good-looking crowd uh from all across the globe I am a retired politician a former mayor and it's always interesting uh people think because you're in these jobs you like public speaking I always let people know I've never enjoyed public speaking every time I get up to speak I think about the first time I spoke at my home Church in Columbia South Carolina St John Baptist Church when I was done a little guy came up to me he said I grow up I'm going to give you some money I said well thank you son but why he said because my daddy said you're one of the poorest speakers we ever had right so I figured I get up and speak when I actually had something worth saying it's exciting to be here exciting to be with my friend the EXIM President Reta Joe Lewis uh thank uh thankful to her for her leadership and having me here and really want to thank the whole EXIM leadership team and staff uh we appreciate everyone convening this year's annual conference uh as a mayor uh for 12 years I've long been a strong proponent of subnational diplomacy as mayor of Columbia South Carolina I saw our International relationship is a key way to grow and further enrich our city we established and strengthen sister cities across the globe designing relationships around shared educational uh culture and economic development opportunities we understood that our connection to cities like Akra and taong and Kaiser slon provide outbound and inbound trade opportunities um and economic development uh opportunities uh for goods and services and also our culture uh in Colombia we also focus on foreign direct investment with cities across the globe strengthening our advanced manufacturing Industries and finding new types of businesses to recruit to our community as a mayor uh as a CEO over our city and leading uh growth of our gross domestic product realizing still that in this country over 90% of America's GDP is created by cities in the metropolitan economies that surround uh those cities I also got in the habit of coming to Washington and my Mantra as a mayor was change doesn't come from Washington change comes to Washington now I work for the president of the United States I would tell you great changes coming uh from Washington I had to throw out my old speech book uh as a former president of the US Conference of Mayors a former president of the African-American Mayors Association and former Vice chair of the global parliament of Mayors we work to Leverage The expertise of global local leaders to tackle Global and National issues to help our communities all across this country and that's exactly as you saw with my friend Frank Scott Jr the mayor of Littel Rock uh and this other members of this distinguished panel it's exactly what's happening with state and local leaders all

across this nation every day under President Joe Biden we've watched our exports uh significantly grow we've seen the fastest recovery in decades as Roosa trade with the rest of the world has also recovered quickly real exports have returned to pre pandemic levels and grew near pre-pandemic averages over the past few quarters real exports of goods are up around 7% relative to pre-pandemic numbers uh through the EXIM banks efforts and other work of the Biden Harris Administration we have a historic opportunity to accelerate this pace uh some of you here are members of the president's export Council uh met a few months ago the very first time the council has been active since 2016 the export council is made up of public and private sector members and provides recommendations to the president in the administration on policies to bolster us trade performance and promote export expansion at the export council meeting secretary J rondo the Department of Commerce issued a national export strategy which provides a FR a framework to expand and diversify US exports this year's strategy underscored opportunities in several sectors including clean energy manufacturing travel and tourism International Education Agriculture and the seafood industry our national export strategy highlights collaborative activities among federal state and local entities recognizing the fact that we all interdependent and interconnected at good strong public private relationships at every level of government are essential to this success for example the US trade development agency launched making Global local which form strategic Partnerships with state and local economic development organizations World Trade Centers Chambers of Commerce and Small Business Development Centers to help companies in their respective communities benefit from export promotion program programs the national export strategy also highlighted the success of several of the administration's International economic priorities such as the inflation reduction act the Indo Pacific economic framework work to America's partnership for economic prosperity and the partnership for Global infrastructure and investment in addition to these International Investments efforts on the export side we're investing in America again and so many of you are a huge part of this effort this true public private partnership as a CEO said during a meeting we had with the president last week we're building again in Industries like semiconductors and solar power industries where the US used to lead the world we're going to make sure that we again regain our Edge and we're making some game-changing Investments to ensure that the industries of the future are built right here in the United States this is going to take some time this is a long-term project when I was mayor we would come to Washington DC for infrastructure week every third week now indeed because of the leadership of President Biden and vice president Harris we have an infrastructure decade this is a long-term project but we're already we're already seeing results that leave us very optimistic we've already had over \$190 billion in private sector commitments investment commitments transformative Investments that will contribute to long-term growth in fact one important element of President Biden's agenda is that

we're catalyzing is that it's catalyzing investment at a historic scale from the three key laws we've passed on infrastructure chips and clean energy we've estimated that the aggregate investment including from both public capital and private investment will total some \$3.5 trillion dollar over the next decade and we see the seeds of this transformation in things like the amazing factory construction boom we're seeing here in this country factory construction spending more than doubled in one year after being essentially flat for decades it's no accident that these increases coincided with a passage of the chips act in July 2022 and the inflation reduction act in August of 2022 it's happening in basically every single region of the country and we're very happy about that I'll wrap um I'll wrap with uh a few key words first to use the two most important Lang words in the English language and there thank you thank each and every one of you for your leadership I used to think the words were thank you were the most two most important words my wife has told me they're actually yes ma'am but I'll go with thank you anyway we thank you for being here and we're going to need your continued help uh we're going to need your help to make sure the major Investments we making are actually translating into deployment at scale and increasing exports we set out on this modern American industrial and Innovation strategy we've passed Three Laws we're executing on them we're in the implementation phase but to succeed we're going to continue to need your help we're going to continue need to work together we're going to continue to need your input and constructive criticism your subject matter expertise we have to work together we're going to need a strong partnership between the public and private sectors and the president expert council is just one example of that our partnership can help us achieve the fundament objective that connects all these efforts helping American businesses and workers and the American economy reach its full potential I want to say again thank you to my friend Reta Joe Lewis thank you to the EXIM staff I appreciate you having me here today on behalf of the president and thank you to each and every one of you for all the work you're doing may God bless you.