

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

109th Congress

Committee on Small Business

2361 Rayburn House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515-6315

February 1, 2006

Chairman Donald Manzullo
House Small Business Committee
2228 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Manzullo:

We are writing to formally request that the Small Business Committee hold a hearing on the administration's FY 2007 budget request for the Small Business Administration (SBA). As you know, the Committee's review and consideration of the proposed budget for the SBA is one of our most significant responsibilities, providing Committee members with the information they need to make informed policy decisions. Holding this hearing is part of our core responsibilities as public servants and it is not our intention to let these duties lapse.

The Committee's annual hearing on the SBA's budget allows members an opportunity to review and examine the only federal agency within its jurisdiction. During this process, stakeholders – including agency officials, industry experts, and small business owners – provide insights and recommendations about the SBA's programs. Over the last year, several critical issues have arisen at the agency, increasing the need for our oversight and attention. Ultimately, it is these forums that shape the Committee's legislative agenda, as well as inform its oversight efforts.

Despite the fact that the President's FY 2007 budget is scheduled to be released early next week, no hearing has been announced. Historically, the committee has always set a hearing date by this time, which raises serious concern that this lack of action may lead to the failure of the Committee to hold a budget hearing. Furthermore, we are dismayed to learn that Administrator Hector V. Barreto's limited availability to testify on behalf of the administration may be contributing to the Committee's failure to convene this hearing.

It is our hope that you will hold a hearing on the SBA's proposed FY 2007 budget. While we recognize that scheduling conflicts do occur, we fully expect that Administrator Barreto will be able to present his agency's budget before the Committee prior to the House vote on the budget resolution. If necessary, we are prepared to meet as soon as next week to receive the Administrator's testimony on the SBA's FY 2007 budget.

The annual hearing on the SBA's budget is an important first step for the Committee this year. As you know, the agency will be reauthorized during 2006 and a full compliment of oversight hearings is necessary to diligently examine the effectiveness and implementation of the agency's programs. We thank you for your attention to this matter and look forward to working with you on this and other issues of importance to our nation's small businesses.

Sincerely,

Gregory H. H.

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Michael K. Michel

Madeline J. Bordallo

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