Public & Governmental Affairs Committee

Decision Point Nears on Revitalize American Manufacturing and Innovation Act

OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT

During July, at the encouragement of the TMS Public and Governmental Affairs Committee, members of the TMS Board of Directors visited the offices of several members of the U.S. Congress to acquaint Representatives and Senators with the opportunity to use TMS to access unbiased, nonpartisan insights from technical experts within the Society membership. Topics discussed included the importance of critical materials, manufacturing, STEM funding, travel authorizations, and visa applications.

Several of the discussions centered on the Revitalize American Manufacturing and Innovation Act (RAMI), which was brought up in meetings with the proposed legislations’ main sponsors, Sen. Sherrod Brown (OH-D) and Congressman Tom Reed (R-NY). The House bill (HR 2996) passed the House Science Committee days before the August recess, and the Senate bill (S 1468) was reported favorably to the floor out of the Senate Commerce Committee. There is a possibility that these bills may pass through Congress before 2015 when a new Congress is seated, and the TMS Public and Governmental Affairs Committee believes that U.S. citizens may wish to acquaint themselves with these bills and potentially offer comment on one or both to either their Representative or Senators.

RAMI’s stated purpose is to support and expand the United States’ manufacturing sector by fully establishing the National Network for Manufacturing Innovation (NNMI), which supports private-public partnerships at hubs or institutes set up regionally around the country. While four institutes have been established, RAMI would provide the resources and authority to establish up to 45 institutes across the country within the next 10 years. The bills’ language establishes memoranda of understanding amongst the various federal agencies working together to advance America’s manufacturing. The lead federal agency is the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), which works in tandem with the Department of Energy and Department of Defense along with numerous private corporations and foundations.

Despite the gridlock on Capitol Hill, both the House and Senate bills are nearly identical (except the Senate would also require the Secretary of Commerce to conduct a survey measuring the economic impact of China’s “rare earth monopoly on the United States” and how best to explore cooperative solutions between both nations). There is some momentum behind the bills and it is possible that one could pass through Congress by the end of 2014, before the next Congress is seated and the legislative cycle begins anew in 2015.

If you would like to read the bills, please click on these links:

HR 2996: https://beta.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/2996

If you would like to share your own views on this bill, you can send a brief email via the Congress member's official website, or call directly and speak with a staffer. The office will record your views and you may receive an electronic or written response explaining the office’s views on the issues shared.

You can find contact details for your Representative at http://www.house.gov/representatives/find/ and http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm for your Senator.

If you are interested in updates on this legislation or have questions about the activities of the TMS Public and Governmental Affairs Committee, you may contact Mary Samsa, TMS Foundation & Public Affairs Manager (msamsa@tms.org).