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SBA ADMINISTRATOR ALVAREZ WELCOMES BUSINESS LEADERS AT NATIONAL REGULATORY FAIRNESS CONFERENCE

WASHINGTON, DC – Aida Alvarez, Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) today welcomed 50 small business leaders together with 37 representatives from other federal agencies to the National Regulatory Fairness Conference, held at SBA's headquarters.

The national ombudsman and the 10 regional fairness boards monitor agency enforcement and compliance activities, while working to improve the regulatory climate for the nation's 25 million small businesses. In 1996, President Clinton signed into law the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act, which led to the creation of the national ombudsman.

During the last three years, the regulatory fairness board has made 30 recommendations to federal agencies (such as OSHA and the IRS) that have regulatory authority over small businesses. Nearly all the agencies—95 percent of them—have complied with the recommendations.

“I'm pleased to welcome the new appointees and founding members of the regional fairness boards,” SBA Administrator Aida Alvarez said. **“I'd also like to thank the small business leaders who have volunteered significant time and energies to serve as Regulatory Fairness Board members. Because of their efforts, the government and the private sector are working in partnership to implement good public policy that is also responsive to the concerns of small businesses.”**

Agencies participating in the conference included the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA), the Department of Labor, the Department of Agriculture and the Internal Revenue Service.

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A number of workshops will be held during the three-day conference. The meetings are aimed at furthering the dialogue between agency officials who oversee regulations that affect small businesses and the Reg-Fair board members, who are entrepreneurs themselves. As board members, they function as the voice of the small business owners nationwide, seeking ways to make federal enforcement and compliance environments friendlier to small businesses.

“By developing partnerships with federal agencies and small business, we can make significant advances in both gauging the pulse of small business and making sure their needs are expressed to those who have the power to make the needed changes,” Alvarez said.

Additional information about SBA’s programs and services is available at SBA’s Web site: <http://www.sba.gov> or by calling the SBA’s Answer Desk at 1-800 U ASK SBA.

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