

Howard Williams' Testimony

Regulatory Reform Series #8 – Private-Sector Views of the Regulatory Climate One Year After Executive Order 13563; Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

Economic uncertainty, not regulation, is the primary deterrent to business growth and development.

A recent survey by the American Sustainable Business Council reveals

- Weak demand is small business owner's biggest problem.
- Small business owners see regulations as a necessary part of a modern economy and believe they can live with them if they are fair and reasonable.

I manage an \$110,000,000 division of an American owned, small multinational business specializing in the development and manufacture of architectural building products.

Although the past 3 years have been some of the most uncertain times, we have continued with the investment strategies that have produced sustained growth for 64 years.

Our investment decisions are made on the basis of market research and financial analysis.

Regulation did not give us cause to question our recent investments; economic uncertainty was our greatest concern.

After a flat year in 2009, our growth curve resumed and posted double digit, year-over-year increases in 2010 and 2011.

Our rate of growth exceeds the annual growth of the market sector in which we operate.

A thriving free market economy self-regulates demand, supply and price, but it does not uniformly, or equitably, regulate health, safety and environmental responsibility.

Entrepreneurs are free to invest, to win or lose their investments. But in the areas of health, safety and the environment do we have the right to invest what is not solely ours to risk?

We debate who will pay the healthcare bill, but spend too little time on causation.

By failing to address substantiated causation we continue to amass a health and environmental debt that will be as burdensome to future generations as our national debt.

Debts that only business can pay because only business generates capital.

Increasingly, the cause of cancer and diseases such as Autism, Parkinson's and other illnesses are being linked to chemicals of concern, and yet we struggle to reform decades old legislation.

In the absence of TSCA Reform, business costs are rising not because of federal regulation, but for lack of it. States are enacting their own chemical regulations. Businesses are requiring environmental declarations revealing the chemical make-up of products and materials.

Businesses are individually investing in the answers to increasing consumer and Business-to-Business demands.

Federal harmonized chemical regulation will set and control the health and safety aspects while making information accessible to all businesses.

Reduced economic regulation removes uncertainty and encourages the free market to invest and grow. With freedom comes the responsibility to conduct business in ways that create and sustain a durable and enduring economy.

It is in business's self-interest to do so.

However, in the areas of health, safety, and the natural environment, the invisible hand of a free market does not naturally yield to the good of the whole.

Some readily hold a copy of Atlas Shrugged in one hand and point to an overreaching government with the other, but ignore that the storyline is equally condemning of self-serving business interests.

We have invested in the research and capital equipment that has allowed us to remove chemicals of concern from our major product line and to begin that work in other products.

Much of our recent growth is directly attributable to this work and we currently enjoy the high ground of an uneven playing field because of our investments.

Such investment would seem to argue against regulation.

Differentiation by regulation is not an acceptable business practice.

We have no right to gain at the risk of the health, safety and environment of either the present or the future.

A strong America is strong economically, physically and militarily. Regulation is not always associated with that context, but in the areas of health, safety and the natural environment two of the three ultimately stand or fail. Regulation helps ensure they stand.