

Engler applauds emphasis on exports

By [Wayne Risher](#)

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President Barack Obama's goal of doubling U.S. exports in five years has been mostly talk and little action to this point, National Association of Manufacturers president John Engler said.

Engler told members of the Economic Club of Memphis on Thursday that his organization hasn't seen enough push by the administration to remove trade barriers, rein in regulatory overkill and create incentives to expand the manufacturing base.

"We applaud the goal of doubling exports," he said.

"FedEx has outbound planes as well as inbound planes, and we want to see all those outbound planes full."

Engler was in Memphis to speak to the club on Thursday night.

Engler is a former three-term governor of Michigan (1991-2003) who joined the manufacturers' organization six years ago.

He said he's encouraged by the administration's commitment to overhauling antiquated export controls, but wary of the country sinking into "regulatory hell."

He touted the bullet points of the association's Manufacturing Strategy for Jobs and a Competitive America, which are to make the United States the best place on Earth:

To headquarter a company;

To pursue innovation in the form of research and development;

And to actually make products for domestic and foreign consumption.

Part of Engler's job is to dispel the notion that America's manufacturing prowess is in the past.

While America lost 2 million manufacturing jobs during the Great Recession, it remains the world's largest manufacturing economy, producing 21 percent of the world's manufactured goods and supporting 18.6 million U.S. jobs.

But U.S. dominance is under attack by competitors that include China and Japan. Engler said policymakers have a relatively small window of time to fix what's wrong.

Solutions include establishing new trade agreements, restoring tax credits for research and development and reducing oppressive tax burdens and regulations, he said.

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