

Senate passes H.R. 527, legislation to secure the supply of helium; bill awaits President's signature

WASHINGTON, Sept. 26, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The Semiconductor Industry Association (SIA), representing U.S. leadership in semiconductor manufacturing and design, today commended members of Congress for approving bipartisan legislation to secure the supply of helium, a gas that is essential for advanced manufacturing of semiconductors and other products, as well as scientific research. The Senate today unanimously approved an amended version of H.R. 527, the Responsible Helium Administration and Stewardship Act. The House passed the same legislation yesterday, and it now awaits the President's signature.

"SIA applauds members of Congress for ensuring continued access to helium supplies and avoiding a needless disruption to the U.S. economy," said Brian Toohey, president and CEO, Semiconductor Industry Association. "We particularly appreciate the strong leadership of House Natural Resources Committee Chairman

Doc Hastings

(R-Wash.), as well as Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairman

Ron Wyden

(D-Ore.) and Ranking Member Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska

), and we urge President Obama to act swiftly to sign this critical legislation into law."

In addition to its uses for advanced manufacturing, helium also has essential applications for scientific research and numerous other products and technologies, including medical devices like MRI machines, chemicals, aerospace, and fiber optics. The sectors that rely on helium spur innovation, boost economic growth, and employ millions of people.

The Federal Helium Reserve – established in the 1920s and operated by the federal government ever since – contains about one-third of the world's helium supply and roughly 40

percent of America's supply. Under current law, on Oct. 7, the reserve will no longer be allowed to sell helium to the companies and scientists that depend on it, and operations will begin winding down on Oct. 1.

H.R. 527 would fix this problem and ensure a reliable supply of helium by allowing the Reserve to continue selling helium to private entities. Doing so would strengthen advanced manufacturing, enable continued scientific research and provide hundreds of millions of dollars in sales revenue to the federal government, according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO).

"Today's vote exemplifies the spirit of bipartisanship and good government," continued Toohey. "We commend members of Congress for their willingness to work collaboratively to secure the supply of helium and strengthen advanced manufacturing, health care, and research operations across America."

About the SIA

The Semiconductor Industry Association (SIA) is the voice of the U.S. semiconductor industry, one of America's top export industries and a key driver of America's economic strength, national security and global competitiveness. Semiconductors – microchips that control all modern electronics – enable the systems and products that we use to work, communicate, travel, entertain, harness energy, treat illness, and make new scientific discoveries. The semiconductor industry directly employs nearly a quarter of a million people in the U.S. In 2012, U.S. semiconductor sales totaled more than \$146 billion, and semiconductors make the global trillion dollar electronics industry possible. Founded in 1977 by five microelectronics pioneers, SIA unites companies that account for 80 percent of America's semiconductor production. Through this coalition, SIA seeks to strengthen U.S. leadership of semiconductor design and manufacturing by working with Congress, the Administration and other key industry stakeholders to encourage policies and regulations that fuel innovation, propel business and drive international competition. Learn more at www.semiconductors.org

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Semiconductor Industry Applauds Final Congressional Approval of Helium Legislation

Written by Australian Business

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