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For more information:

Semiconductor Industry Association

John Greenagel

408-436-6600

mailbox@sia-online.org

Ian Steff

202-429-1413

isteff@sia-online.org

Semiconductor Industry Urges for Passage of Three Bills to Help U.S. Employers Retain Critical Highly Educated Workers

In Testimony, SIA Says Bipartisan Legislation Would Make Needed Adjustments to Employment-based Green Card System

San Jose, CA – June 12, 2008 – In testimony today before the House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Immigration, Eddie Sweeney, Senior Vice President for Worldwide Human Resources at National Semiconductor and Chairman of the SIA Workforce Committee, called for approval this year of three bipartisan bills that would make incremental changes to the employment-based (EB) green card system. Sweeney particularly highlighted the importance of EB green cards to continued innovation in the semiconductor industry.

"To design semiconductors – the most complex product manufactured on the planet – we need to hire and retain the brightest minds from our nation's universities. Half of the masters and 71 percent of the PhDs in electrical engineering from U.S. universities are foreign nationals," said Sweeney. "While contributing to our companies and the U.S. economy, these highly educated graduates must wait for years for their green cards, putting their lives in limbo."

An SIA survey found that U.S semiconductor companies apply for EB green cards for 97 percent of H-1B hires, and nearly 3,800 industry employees are waiting in the process – 20 percent of these for four years or longer.

In order to retain these critical professionals, Sweeney urged for passage this year of three bills, which would:

- Exempt highly educated, foreign-born students earning an advanced degree in science, technology, engineering or mathematics from a U.S. university from the annual EB green card limit (H.R. 6039)
- "Recapture" employment-based (EB) green cards that Congress authorized in the past but that went unused before the end of the fiscal year because of government processing delays (H.R. 5882)
- Eliminate per country limits on EB green card distribution, thus removing artificial bottlenecks for employees from high-demand countries (H.R. 5921)

Sweeney emphasized the fact that SIA has partnered with IEEE-USA, which represents electrical and electronics engineers, in support of the three EB green card reform bills. The two organizations sent a letter to Chairwoman Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) in support of the legislation.

“The SIA and IEEE-USA worked hard to find common ground, and we urge the Congress to similarly work on a bipartisan basis to pass these important bills this year.”

For a copy of the testimony, [click here](#). To view the SIA-IEEE-USA letter to Chairwoman Lofgren in support of the three bills, [click here](#).

About the SIA

The SIA is the leading voice for the semiconductor industry and has represented U.S. semiconductor companies since 1977. Collectively, the chip industry employs a domestic workforce of 216,000 people. More information about the SIA can be found at www.sia-online.org.