



NEWS RELEASE

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Public Forum Set for Small Business Owners in Maine to Comment on Federal Regulatory Enforcement

Augusta – Maine -- Small business owners, community leaders and representatives of trade associations concerned about excessive enforcement of federal rules can voice their complaints at a **U.S. Small Business Administration Regulatory Fairness Board Forum in Portland on Thursday, August 16, 2007 from 10 a.m. to Noon.**

The forum will be held at the Portland SCORE Office on 100 Middle Street, 2nd Floor, Portland, Maine.

SBA National Ombudsman Nicholas Owens, members of the SBA's Region I Regulatory Fairness Board, and representatives of federal regulatory agencies will hear comments and complaints about regulatory enforcement and compliance.

“One of the leading concerns small business owners face is unfair enforcement of federal regulations. They also worry about telling their stories because they fear retaliation by federal agencies,” Owens said. “Small business owners want to play by the rules and comply with federal regulations. We want to encourage Federal regulators to provide effective compliance assistance, rather than go straight to the penalty stage. Regulatory enforcement should be effective, not excessive.”

This forum offers small business owners a chance to express their concerns about federal compliance practices in Portland.

Comments and complaints presented during this forum will be directed to the appropriate federal regulatory agency. This information will also be shared with federal officials in the National Ombudsman's Annual Report to Congress, and with leadership of federal regulatory agencies to assist them with their enforcement actions.

The forum is open to the public. Those wishing to testify should contact Bonnie Erickson of the SBA Maine District Office at (207) 622-8275 or by email at bonnie.erickson@sba.gov before the forum. Should small business owners or representatives be unable to attend, written testimony may be sent in advance of the forum to be included in the public record.

Comments and concerns about federal enforcement actions can be addressed directly to SBA's Office of the National Ombudsman at 1-888-734-3247 (REGFAIR). For more information about the National Ombudsman and the Portland forum, please visit the web site www.sba.gov/ombudsman.