

How to Boost Green Energy And Efficiency

By [Francisco J. Sanchez](#)

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Russia is committed to increasing energy efficiency, lowering energy intensity and raising economic productivity to benefit its economy. In fact, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has identified energy efficiency as a top priority for modernizing the economy. Russia's goal has multiple positive benefits, including the potential for expanded trade with the United States in this sector. That is why I am leading a U.S. Commerce Department energy-efficiency trade mission with 13 U.S. companies to Moscow next week.

Russia's pursuit of greater energy efficiency is already stimulating great interest among U.S. businesses. Many U.S. businesses on the mission have a particular interest in Russia's focus on smart grids, green-building and road infrastructure. Russia is already working with the United States to implement smart-grid technology as its utilities educate consumers on using energy more efficiently, develop and deliver more renewable energy and generate and deliver electricity to consumers in a more efficient manner.

Moreover, Russia's 2009 energy-efficiency legislation encourages energy savings through provisions, including new requirements for product labeling about energy efficiency and guidelines on how to increase the energy efficiency of new buildings. This legislation has also led Russia's "green building" community to proactively promote green techniques in the traditional construction sector and to advocate for expansion of green-building standards.

U.S. businesses are further encouraged by Russia's recent invitation to join the World Trade Organization. Russia is expected to formally join the WTO this summer and has committed to reducing or eliminating tariffs on thousands of products, including many that involve energy-related products and technologies. This will make an important contribution to a U.S.-Russia trade that has grown from less than \$10 billion in 2002 to almost \$43 billion in 2011.

In April, the U.S. Commerce Department led an automotive parts mission to Russia. This visit and the energy-efficiency mission are important elements of President Barack Obama's National Export Initiative that aims to double overall U.S. exports by the end of 2014 and create stronger economic links between nations.

We look forward to establishing new collaborative partnerships with our Russian counterparts that will benefit both our countries.

Francisco J. Sanchez is U.S. under secretary for international trade at the Commerce Department.

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