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Opening Statement Chairman Todd R. Platts Subcommittee on Government Efficiency and Financial Management April 1, 2003

Federal Government appropriations decisions have traditionally been based on three things: the amount of funding that a program received in the previous year, the President's requests and the policy preferences of Congress. A more appropriate approach, however, is for congress to focus on whether federal taxpayers are receiving a good return on the investment of their hard-earned dollars. Unfortunately, it is a long-standing and well-documented fact that many agencies are unable to provide substantial, tangible evidence of the benefits the public receives for the money spent. Today's hearing is the second in a series of three hearings on the topic of "Governing With Accountability." In this hearing, we will explore the value of the Government Performance and Results Act and the Program Assessment Rating Tool, which share the goal of attempting to provide the information necessary for Congress to make performance based budgeting decisions.

In 1993, Congress passed the Government Performance and Results Act - known as GPRA or the Results Act. GPRA seeks to tie the funds an agency receives through the appropriations process to the agency's annual performance results.

GPRA, however, is only as good as the quality of the goals each agency sets for its programs. While some agencies have made good use of GPRA, it is frustrating that some agencies still have not set appropriate goals. The performance plans and reports required by GPRA have to be more than just a paperwork exercise if Congress is going to be able to make informed budgeting decisions based on these reports.

President Bush and his Administration should be applauded for their strong commitment to tying budget decisions to performance. In furtherance of the budget and performance integration initiative in the President's Management Agenda, OMB has developed the Program Assessment Rating Tool or PART. Unlike GPRA, which looks at agency-wide performance, the PART examines the performance of individual programs. PART was used for the first time this past year, and the PART ratings for 234 Federal

programs, representing over 20% of all Federal funding were published in the fiscal year 2004 budget. While PART has the potential to be a very valuable tool for appropriators, more than half of the programs examined received grades of “results not demonstrated” because of inadequate performance goals or the lack of data to provide evidence of results.

While GPRA and PART are important tools for measuring performance, it is unclear how these tools compliment one another. In a recent forum on GPRA and PART, many Federal managers expressed frustrations with what they view as two overlapping measurement tools. They would much rather see one set of measurements with clear guidelines.

Our witnesses today will certainly provide us with valuable input on how Congress can help facilitate improvements in the quality of performance information. I am pleased to have with us today: The Honorable Donna McLean, the Chief Financial Officer with the Department of Transportation; Mr. Paul Posner, Director of Strategic Issues at the General Accounting Office; and Mr. Maurice McTigue who leads the Government Accountability Project at the Mercatus Center. I look forward to their testimonies regarding budget and performance integration.