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March 13, 2009

Honorable Carl Levin
United States Senate
Armed Services Committee
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Levin:

On behalf of IPC's 2,700 member companies, I would like to request the expected date of the appointment of the federally mandated Department of Defense (DoD) Printed Circuit Board (PCB) Executive Agent. The law requires the appointment of the Executive Agent by January 2009. However, this critical position for the survivability of the U.S. PCB industry and its support of DoD requirements remains vacant.

IPC is the trade association for the printed circuit board and electronics assembly industries. These critical electronic products are the foundation of all of America's consumer and industrial electronics, including defense, transportation, and telecommunications equipment. Over the past 20 years, the domestic circuit board industry has decreased from 42 percent of global printed circuit board revenue to less than 10 percent, resulting in the loss of printed circuit board manufacturers and the disappearance of high quality U.S. manufacturing jobs.

Recognizing a threat to national security, Congress enacted section 256 of the FY 2009 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 110-417) directing the DoD to create a position of a PCB Executive Agent. Congress directed the Executive Agent to oversee the development and implementation of a PCB and interconnect technology roadmap for the DoD. The Executive Agent is required to create a policy to assure that DoD has access to PCB manufacturing capabilities and the technical expertise necessary to meet future military requirements. The law also requires the Executive Agent to assess and develop a plan to address the PCB supply chain to the DoD and trustworthiness requirements for PCBs used in defense systems.

The Executive Agent can play a vital role in guaranteeing that the industry is able to meet DoD PCB requirements, ensuring our national security and helping to sustain state-of-art technology within the U.S. PCB industry. However, IPC is gravely concerned that without a champion, the DoD will surely lose the U.S. PCB manufacturing base.

IPC has formed a task force of the top U.S. PCB manufacturers who are ready and willing to assist and counsel the Executive Agent when one is appointed.

We hope you will assist us in the appointment of the Executive Agent. IPC is eager to work with you and your staff on this and future activities to ensure our National Security and our industry's future economic viability.

Sincerely,

Dennis P. McGuirk
President & CEO

Cc: Senator McCain
Senator Bayh
Senator Burr
Senator Inhofe
Chairman Skelton
Representative McHugh
Representative Ellsworth
Representative Ortiz
Representative Forbes