



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
Assistant Secretary for Legislative  
and Intergovernmental Affairs  
Washington, D.C. 20230

March 17, 2023

The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ranking Member DeLauro:

Thank you for facilitating a discussion about how the unprecedented cuts proposed by Congressional Republicans would impact the key operations, programs, services and protections the Department of Commerce provides to the American people. President Biden's FY24 Budget lays out a detailed plan to invest in America, continue to lower costs for families, protect and strengthen Social Security and Medicare, and reduce the deficit. Meanwhile, Congressional Republicans have proposed unprecedented cuts in FY 2024 funding for key services, programs and protections such as education, public safety, research, nutrition and more. Cuts on this scale would have very real and damaging impacts on our families, communities, economy, and competitiveness.

The Department conducted a preliminary analysis of potential impacts if the Department had to return to FY 2022 enacted levels or absorb a 22% reduction to our spending in FY 2024. If the Congressional Republicans executed either scenario, they would cause significant damage to:

- **National Security** – Cuts of these levels would cede advances in national security by reducing the Bureau of Industry and Security's (BIS) enforcement of critical export controls, including those that keep sensitive goods and technology out of the hands of our adversaries. If BIS were required to reduce staffing by 22%, BIS would have around 125 fewer people to implement its programs than the President calls for in the FY 2024 Budget.
- **Economic Competitiveness** – Funding at these levels would weaken the nation's economic competitiveness by reducing the International Trade Administration's (ITA) capacity to promote trade and investment and ensure fair trade and compliance with trade laws and agreements.

- **American Jobs** – These cuts would reverse efforts to create stronger communities and better paying jobs across the nation by reducing the Economic Development Administration’s grant funding by \$155 million (22% of the FY 2024 President’s Budget) and reducing Minority Business Development Agency’s activities and grant programs that help business hire more employees and grow.
- **Disaster Preparedness** – Impede the National Weather Service’s ability to issue the most accurate weather forecasts, watches and warning and undermine the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)’s ability to address badly needed infrastructure and facilities modernization and repair across the nation, including improvements needed for Weather Forecast Offices and River Forecast Centers. Degrade NOAA’s ability to operate the aircraft that are vital to support the National Weather Service’s ability to issue the most accurate weather forecasts, watches and warnings, especially severe weather events like hurricanes. Forestall our ability to ensure continuous weather and climate observations in the coming decades by slashing investments in the next generation of weather and space-weather satellites.
- **Natural Environment** – Erode NOAA’s ability to protect our environment, manage our natural resources, and combat climate change by reducing funds for grants and other programs, including those that support climate science, fisheries management, oceans, education, and renewable energy deployment.

In either funding scenario, we would also be forced to implement a hiring freeze and potentially a reduction in force. If the Department was required to eliminate 22% of the positions funded by appropriations, the Department would need to eliminate more than 5,000 positions either via a hiring freeze or a reduction in force. While cutting the Federal workforce may be a good talking point for Congressional Republicans, it would be a bad deal for the American public. We need a strong, reliable Federal workforce to impartially, efficiently, and effectively oversee the Department’s programs, services, and investments.

Thank you again for providing me the opportunity to describe some potential negative impacts to the American people if Congressional Republicans execute their proposal to inflict unprecedented cuts on the Department of Commerce’s budget. The Department of Commerce looks forward to working with you to ensure that the President’s Budget is enacted and that the ill-conceived cuts proposed by Congressional Republicans do not come to pass.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susie Feliz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Susie Feliz