

November 12, 2015

The Honorable John Culberson
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, and Science
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Honda
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, and Science
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, and Science
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, and Science
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby, Ranking Member Mikulski, Chairman Culberson, and Ranking Member Honda,

We the undersigned organizations wish to convey our strong support for the FY16 budget for the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), urging at least \$100 million be enacted in the final agreement. Both the House and Senate FY16 marks for the BEA flat fund this important agency at \$96 million, but this level would amount to a \$4 million cut to its programs because of its upcoming move to the U.S. Census Bureau headquarters in Suitland, MD.

While a relatively small agency, the BEA is enormously important to understanding our multi-trillion dollar economy. The BEA National Income and Product Accounts provide an overall picture of the economic health of our economy as well as an essential sector-by-sector and geographic report. Its data are used by federal, state and local government to inform economic and fiscal policy and to spur economic growth and job creation. BEA data also play a vital role in guiding business and investment decisions in the private sector. The data provided by BEA, essential as it is to both public and private decisions, are not available from any other source. In these difficult economic and fiscal times, we believe the extraordinary return on investment provided by the BEA thoroughly justifies the requested increase in FY16.

Just as our economy is constantly changing, the BEA is constantly improving its methods to adjust to our dynamic economy. We note with concern therefore that BEA's budget has declined in inflation-adjusted dollars by several percent since FY10, resulting the cuts to programs that inform economic development and growth on a regional level.

While we understand the very difficult budget environment, we respectfully ask that consideration also be given to fund the FY16 initiatives, Big Data for Small Business, Energy Satellite Account, and Services Trade. Both illustrate how better economic statistical data will help strengthen our economy. The small business initiative would include a new Small Business GDP to track the overall growth and health of America's small business sector. Since small

businesses often react to policy changes or economic trends in their regions or sectors before larger corporations, this initiative would provide insight into the leading edge of changes in the economy. The service trade initiative proposes to expand data on service, which accounted for 30% of total U.S. exports in 2013, to inform our trade negotiations and support our trade promotion efforts. The energy initiative would improve overall our understanding of the large component of our economy related to energy.

In short, we believe an FY16 budget of at least \$100 million is an essential investment for promoting economic growth and job creation. This investment in our information infrastructure – small relative to our multi-trillion dollar economy which it tracks – will repay the public many times over.

Thank you for your consideration.

Agricultural & Applied Economics Association
American Association for Public Opinion Research
American Sociological Association
American Statistical Association
Association for University Business and Economic Research
Association of Academic Survey Research Organizations
Association of Population Centers
Association of Public Data Users
Center for Data Innovation
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Council for Community and Economic Research
Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics
Economic History Association
National Association for Business Economics
North American Regional Science Council
Population Association of America
State International Development Organizations
U.S. Chamber of Commerce