

April 22, 2019

The Honorable José Serrano
Chair
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, and Science
Washington, DC 20515

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

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chair
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, and Science
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, and Science
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Serrano, Ranking Member Aderholt, Chairman Moran, and Ranking Member Shaheen,

We the undersigned organizations write to convey our strong support the administration's request of \$108 million for the FY20 budget of the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA).

While a relatively small agency, BEA is enormously important to understanding our multi-trillion-dollar economy. BEA's 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. We believe the extraordinary return on investment provided by the BEA thoroughly justifies a budget of \$108 million in FY20.

The requested amount for BEA would allow it to undertake several important initiatives. The first is the development of a data service framework to promote evidence-based policymaking as required by the newly enacted Foundations of Evidence-Based Policymaking Act. The requested additional funding would support government-wide data access and sharing, improve cross-agency data discovery and utilization, and enhance privacy and confidentiality practices. It would also support the Advisory Committee on Data for Evidence Building, which will make recommendations to the Office of Management and Budget on how to promote the use of Federal data for evidence building. The \$108 million would also enable BEA to produce annual GDP statistics for Puerto Rico to facilitate policy makers and businesses to engage in short- and long-term analysis and planning for developing Puerto Rico's economy. The requested increase would also allow BEA to improve existing statistics and faster development of new data products, a critical step in BEA's longer-term plan to accelerate the publication of GDP by industry and GDP by state statistics. Lastly, the proposed amount would support the

Administration’s proposal to reorganize the Bureau of Labor Statistics alongside the Census Bureau and BEA within the Department of Commerce. As noted in the budget justification provided to Congress, “the goals of this effort are to increase operational efficiencies; reduce respondent burden; enhance privacy protections; and improve data quality and availability.”

In short, we believe at \$108 million for the BEA is an essential investment for promoting economic growth and job creation. Just as our economy is constantly changing, BEA is constantly improving its methods to adjust to our dynamic economy. This investment in our information infrastructure—small relative to our multi-trillion-dollar economy which it tracks—allows BEA to keep up with the changes in our economy and will repay the public many times over.

Thank you for your consideration.

American Association for Public Opinion
Research
American Planning Association
American Sociological Association
American Statistical Association
Association for Public Policy Analysis and
Management
Association for University Business &
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
Industry Studies Association
National Association for Business Economics
Population Association of America
State International Development Organizations
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

The staff contact for this letter is Steve Pierson, Director of Science Policy for the American Statistical Association (pierson@amstat.org; 703.302.1841.)