

## **DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE HEARING**

Thursday, March 4, 2010

Opening Statement

Alan B. Mollohan, Chairman

Good afternoon. Welcome. This hearing is called to order.

Today we will hear testimony from Secretary Gary Locke of the Department of Commerce. The fiscal year 2011 budget request includes \$8.9 billion in discretionary funds for Commerce, a decrease of \$5.1 billion, or 36 percent, below the fiscal year 2010 enacted level.

The significant decrease is attributable to the anticipated completion of the 2010 Census Decennial. But there are some significant increases in the proposed budget, as well, including \$809 million in NOAA for satellites, catch shares, and conservation and climate change related programs; and \$87 million in ITA for a National Export Initiative.

Last week, this subcommittee heard testimony from the Director of NIST, Dr. Pat Gallagher. Later this month, we will hold separate hearings on EDA, NOAA, and USPTO, which will provide us with the opportunity to look more closely at programs within those agencies.

Today's hearing will allow us to touch on issues of Departmental oversight and overarching policy issues affecting these agencies, while also delving into issues and funding related to other Commerce Department agencies,

including the Census Bureau, the International Trade Administration (ITA), and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA).

The 2010 Decennial Census has officially begun, with enumeration in remote Alaskan villages completed. We look forward to a status report and a timeline for the rest of the country, as well as discussions on current concerns, including the effectiveness and cost of Decennial advertising. Apparently, Census has gotten one thing right, Mr. Secretary, because everyone appears to have seen the Super Bowl ad – whatever one might think about it.

NTIA has significant American Recovery and Reinvestment Act responsibilities, in overseeing \$4.7 billion in broadband grant awards. While there are concerns about the delay in first round awards, it is exciting to contemplate a future where high speed Internet connections are as common as telephones.

We will also discuss how ITA's proposed National Export Initiative will help promote U.S. exports and protect U.S. jobs from unfair export subsidies.

And finally, the Department has held a number of events and made quite a few announcements in fiscal year 2010. At times, the announcements are made well in advance of any actual implementation and so details are scarce. The focus appears to be more on getting good press coverage for the Department's efforts and less on the actual benefits to the public. So we intend to get to some of those details today.

There is much to discuss. Thank you for coming, Secretary Locke.

Following the opening statement of Ranking Member Wolf, we will ask you to provide a brief summary of your written testimony, which will be included in the hearing record, and then we will go to questions from subcommittee members.