

April 7, 2020

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 thank you for your strong support of the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) through the FY20 level of \$108 million. We appreciate the additional funding that enables BEA to carry out and continue to improve its ongoing programs, develop income growth indicators, produce annual Gross Domestic Product statistics for Puerto Rico, and continue an Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account. We also wish to convey our strong support for the administration's request of \$112 million for the FY21 budget.

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 and informing academic and applied economic research and research training activities. 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, private, and scientific decisions, are not available from any other source. We believe the extraordinary return on investment provided by the BEA thoroughly justifies a budget of \$112 million in FY21.

The requested amount for BEA would allow it to support the administration's initiative to strengthen economic statistics. The requested level includes an increase for the Regional Economics program which, as noted in the Congressional Justification, produces regional accounts data that "are required by the formula used to allocate close to \$400 billion in Federal Funds and are the basis for virtually all states' spending and revenue forecasts." The request also supports the continued development of a data service framework to promote evidence-based policymaking and government-wide data access and sharing and the Department of Commerce

Chief Data Officer to coordinate and oversee lifecycle data management. BEA will also continue working with the U.S. Census Bureau to improve the data that go into calculating GDP.

In short, we believe that \$112 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 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
National Association of Development
Organizations
Population Association of America
Society of Government Economists
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.)