

**Chairman Hal Rogers**  
**House Committee on Appropriations**  
**Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies**  
**Department of Commerce FY 2013 Budget Hearing**  
**Secretary of Commerce John Bryson**  
**March 20, 2012**  
**Opening Statement – As Prepared**

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Thank you, Chairman Wolf for yielding. And Secretary Bryson, thank you for appearing today for your first testimony before the Appropriations Committee.

One need not be a PhD of Economics to understand the global economy –particularly Europe – is in a tailspin. China’s economy, which had been on a vertical trajectory, is now slowing and sputtering. Japan’s economy, once a bright star in the Pacific Rim, is shrinking. Meanwhile, our own economy is growing at a snail’s pace. Unemployment continues to hover at over 8 percent, and yesterday’s newspapers tell a story that factory and manufacturing work in our country is failing to rebound while continued trillion dollar deficits – including some \$6 trillion already added under this Administration’s watch – are creating pessimism globally that we’ll be able to meet our obligations and pay our bills.

With this economic and fiscal backdrop, the Appropriations Committee has been the tip of the spear in Congress to roll back the trend of increasing and unsustainable discretionary spending and trillion dollar deficits. Last year, we worked diligently to restore transparency, austerity, and tough oversight to the Appropriations process – and we succeeded in reducing discretionary spending by some \$95 billion from FY10 levels. This historic achievement involved thorough scrutiny of the Administration’s budget proposals, including the Department of Commerce.

There is no question that the Department of Commerce has a vital role to ensure that our country is focused on job creation, entrepreneurship and innovation, and is competitive on the economic global playing field. We need to foster an environment where companies, big and small, feel confident investing here in the U.S., and we need to demonstrate leadership in the world at large to expand the market for U.S. products across the globe. Your job is crucial to identifying and removing obstacles to our economic growth and prosperity by reducing international trade barriers, removing regulatory roadblocks, answering the shortage of small community capital or offering business expertise to our nation’s working men and women. Whether that is through small scale EDA investments in rural communities, holding the toes of unwieldy trade partners to the fire through the office of the U.S. trade representative, or supporting job-creating, science-based research at NOAA and NIST, Commerce plays a critical role in turning our economy around. But it must do so cognizant that we can no longer go on spending money we don’t have and borrowing like there is no tomorrow.

Despite the Committee’s efforts to responsibly reduce discretionary spending, it is mandatory spending costs that are the largest driver of our debt - and are largely outside the purview of this committee. Mandatory spending continues to skyrocket and place the future solvency of many

programs in jeopardy. While your budget request contains \$8 billion in discretionary funding, which in and of itself represents an increase of 5% above the FY12 enacted level, it also includes some \$2.3 billion in mandatory funding for new programs. I remain concerned that as we move more and more spending to the mandatory side of the ledger – to run amuck on autopilot absent congressional oversight – we do our great nation a tremendous disservice and threaten its long-term economic and national security. This is further compounded by the concern I share with Chairman Wolf that your Department’s congressional justifications were not timely or sufficiently thorough. We must continue to provide strong oversight and control spending to ensure that the American people receive the greatest value from each and every precious tax dollar, and this will not be possible without the best possible information from your Department.

I look forward to hearing from you today about the Administration’s priorities.

Thank you.

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