



AMERICAN CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE IN NORWAY

The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on the Budget
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

July 5, 2017

Dear Ranking Member Sanders:

On behalf of the American Chamber of Commerce in Norway (AmCham), which represents more than 230 companies and serves as the voice of American business in Norway, I write to express our concerns about the budget cuts proposed for the Department of Commerce and Department of State.

Decreasing the International Trade Administration (ITA) budget concerning export promotion and trade analysis activities by \$43.5 million is a problematic objective. Among other things, it raises the question of how these cuts would impact activities intended to attract foreign direct investment to the U.S., and ultimately create jobs.

This rescaling will not only affect potential jobs and investments, but current positions. Global Markets will eliminate more than 230 positions including locally-employed staff and Commercial Service Officers. ITA will close an estimated 35 international posts and an estimated 10 U.S. Export Assistance Centers, while also reducing headquarters staff. This downsizing will adversely impact U.S. exporters, including small and medium-sized enterprises that export directly or supply exporters.

Correspondingly, the proposed cuts at the State Department will undermine soft diplomacy activities, many of which support U.S. commercial interests. Furthermore, we are concerned that the perceived withdrawal of the U.S. from its historical role as a global leader on diplomatic and trade-related matters will harm U.S. businesses. Moreover, at a time of increased commercial competition, the U.S. should not be retreating from commercial diplomacy

The Commerce and State Departments are vital to our mission to promote U.S. - Norwegian trade and investment, and U.S. commercial interests in Norway. Our partners in the federal government, especially those in the U.S. Embassy, play a critical role in our work to remove barriers to commerce, ensure market access and the robust protection of intellectual property.

Sincerely,

Jason Turflinger
Managing Director
American Chamber of Commerce in Norway