March 20, 2013

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman  
Co-Chair  
Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
2322A Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse  
Co-Chair  
Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Oversight  
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Edward J. Markey  
Co-Chair  
Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Natural Resources  
1329 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Benjamin L. Cardin  
Co-Chair  
Bicameral Task Force on Climate Change  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Water and Wildlife  
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Waxman, Whitehouse, Markey, and Cardin:

This letter responds to your February 25, 2013, request to review the Commerce Department’s policies, environmental programs, and activities to carry out requirements that federal agencies address climate change.

To accomplish this review, we sent a memorandum to the Department’s Office of General Counsel, requesting that they identify existing requirements to address climate change in law, regulation, executive order, and other directives applicable to Commerce. Once we receive this, we will assess whether Commerce is meeting those requirements and, if not, make recommendations for improvement.

We will then address the second part of your request, which asked us to assess (1) Commerce’s authorities to reduce emissions of heat-trapping pollution, (2) its authorities to make the nation more resilient to the effects of climate change, and (3) the most effective additional steps that could be taken to reduce emissions and strengthen resiliency.

We are commencing work immediately and are currently evaluating the Department’s efforts to reduce energy when renovating buildings, such as our headquarters: the Herbert C. Hoover Building in Washington, DC. We are currently reviewing the Department’s Strategic Sustainability Performance Plan and its Greenhouse Gas Inventory Management Plan to evaluate the Department’s efforts to reduce greenhouse gases, as outlined in Executive Order 13514.
If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 482-4661.

Sincerely,

Todd J. Zinser