
From: Broadcast, DOC
Sent: Friday, April 24, 2020 1:36 PM
To: Broadcast, DOC
Subject: A Message from Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross (4.24.20)

Colleagues—

I am incredibly proud that the Department of Commerce, one month after implementing mandatory telework, continues to serve the American public with distinction. A special thank you to the mission critical employees who are still reporting to DOC facilities in order to keep operations running smoothly.

At this time, there are no changes to the Department's mandatory telework status. Know that your health and safety is the top priority for me and my leadership team and that we continue to monitor evolving guidance at the Federal, State, and local levels. Any future changes to our operating procedures will be implemented in a safe, smart, and responsible manner that protects employee health.

Like all of you, I continue to telework to the maximum extent possible while fulfilling my responsibilities to the Department and to the President. I understand that telework and social distancing can be quite frustrating at times, but I hope we take solace in knowing that these temporary changes to normal life are having a real impact: we are slowing the spread of COVID-19 and saving lives.

Although recent signs of progress against COVID-19 are encouraging, this remains a difficult time for so many both at home and around the world. My prayers go out to all who are struggling with this horrible disease and to those who have tragically lost loved ones during this fight.

I think it is important to share with you some of the incredible work being carried out by our Department colleagues at this time. When you read the anecdotes below, it is crystal clear that the men and women of Commerce are stepping up to support the President's whole-of-America approach to defeat COVID-19 and return our nation to good health and prosperity.

Several of our bureaus have taken direct actions to support the response to COVID-19:

- NIST engineers released a tool to help hospital professionals improve their disinfection procedures for N95 masks.
- ITA worked with interagency partners to support over 100 organizations and 47 States and localities to facilitate disbursement of PPE supplies and medical equipment across the U.S.
- BIS utilized certain statutory authorities to give the General Services Administration enhanced procurement powers to buy cleaning supplies and IT equipment for government operations.
- NTIA worked with the Federal Communications Commission to temporarily expand spectrum access for wireless services providers in order to support elevated demand for telecom services.

Our bureaus are hard at work to operationalize new funds authorized by the CARES Act signed by President Trump. Some examples of these programs include:

- \$1.5 billion for EDA's Economic Adjustment Assistance program to help communities and regions recover from the impact of COVID-19.
- \$300 million for NOAA Fisheries to support subsistence harvest, commercial fishing, charter fishing, seafood processing, and marine aquaculture sectors of each state, Tribe, or territory impacted by COVID-19.

- \$60 million for NIST's Manufacturing Extension Partnership and Manufacturing USA programs to help manufacturers respond to and recover from COVID-19.
- \$10 million for MBDA to deliver technical assistance to minority businesses as they recover from the impact of COVID-19.

Even with unprecedented interruptions to economic and social activities around the country, our bureaus have found ways to continue to fulfill their mission and deliver for the American people. Some highlights include:

- BEA successfully released seven economic news releases – all on time – with 100% staff on telework, proving their ability to provide accurate and reliable economic data at a time of unprecedented disruptions and great public interest.
- USPTO seamlessly transitioned nearly 9,000 patent examiners and trademark examining attorneys as well as hundreds of administrative judges to telework and virtual hearings, a result of pioneering telework policies at the agency that were ahead of their time.
- The Census Bureau remains at the helm of the largest civilian mobilization in our country: the 2020 Census. More than half of American households have already responded and the Census Bureau works every day to remind households that they can complete their census anytime by visiting [2020Census.gov](https://2020census.gov).

These examples of the great work happening at our Department give me additional confidence that America will emerge from these difficult times stronger, healthier, and more prosperous than ever before. Please continue to stay safe.

Thank you,

Secretary Wilbur Ross