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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6350

June 29, 2005

The Honorable Hector V. Barreto  
Administrator  
U.S. Small Business Administration  
409 3rd Street S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20416

Dear Administrator Barreto:

Thank you for your June 3, 2005 response to my letter regarding the Women-Owned Small Business Set-Aside Program.

I appreciate that the SBA is in the midst of litigation regarding the implementation of the Women-Owned Small Business Set-Aside Program, however, as the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, I will continue to work to ensure that implementing regulations are put in place as soon as possible and according to Congressional intent.

I am disappointed that the implementation of this much-needed program to give women-owned businesses a greater share of federal contracts has been delayed for almost five years. I welcome your recent announcement that the SBA has begun the process needed to implement the program and, as your letter stated, that the SBA will be "issuing proposed regulations and soliciting proposals to undertake a revised study in accordance with the recommendations of the National Academy." However, there was no indication as to when the SBA expects to act on these plans. What is the SBA's target date for releasing the RFP for the women's business study? What is the target date for issuing the proposed regulations? Given that this program is already well overdue, it is imperative that the SBA offer a specific timeline for proposing regulations and a target date to request proposals for the study.

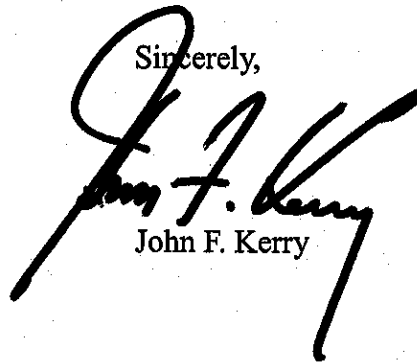
Your letter also discusses the success of the Business Matchmaking program in creating business opportunities for women-owned businesses. What is the total number and dollar amount of contracts awarded to women in 2004 that can be directly attributed to the Business Matchmaking program? How does the SBA measure the performance of this program to ensure that the contracts are actually awarded as a result of Matchmaking actions?

Women-owned businesses will continue to lose billions of dollars each year that their share of Federal contracts fails to meet the statutory five percent goal. As the implementation continues, it is even more important that the SBA ensures the highest

levels of transparency. In that regard, I request that your office provide the Committee with a timeline for proposed regulations and a target date to request proposals for the industry study by Monday, July 11, 2005.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter and your efforts to increase opportunities for women-owned businesses. I look forward to your response. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or have a member of your staff contact Nigel Stephens on my staff at (202) 224-8496.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John F. Kerry". The signature is stylized with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

John F. Kerry