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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6350

October 30, 2008

The Honorable Sandy K. Baruah
Acting Administrator
U.S. Small Business Administration
409 Third Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20416

Dear Acting Administrator Baruah:

As Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, we respectfully request that you extend the comment period until January 30, 2009, for the proposed use of new data sets to determine applicable industries for the implementation of the Women's Procurement program published in the Federal Register on October 1, 2008. It has taken nearly eight years for the Small Business Administration (SBA) to implement a women's procurement program and we wish to ensure that the SBA's final women's procurement rule is truly meaningful. This proposed rule must help the federal government to not only meet but exceed its statutory 5 percent women's small business contracting goal.

In addition, we also request, as part of this extension, that the SBA publish in the Federal Register the non-public Survey of Business Owners (SBO) data set referenced in the proposed rule (73 Fed. Reg. 57,014) within 30 days of receipt of this letter. Unlike the initial study, the SBO data used in the proposed rule is unavailable for public review making it difficult, if not impossible, for interested parties to fully analyze and comment on the proposed rule. Moreover, we believe that the public dissemination of this information along with the extension of the comment period will provide women small business owners from across the country additional necessary time to prepare and submit comments based upon the full and entire data used for the proposed rule.

Thank you for your consideration and cooperation with this request. If you have any questions please contact us or have your staff contact Mr. Gregory Willis or Mr. Erik Necciai on our Committee staff at 202-224-5175.

Sincerely,


John F. Kerry
Chairman


Olympia J. Snowe
Ranking Member