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News Media Contact:

Shira Kramer, (202) 482-4883, skramer@doc.gov

Statement from U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke on Retail Sales in March 2011

WASHINGTON – The Commerce Department’s U.S. Census Bureau today released retail sales data for March 2011. Retail sales rose 0.4 percent, slightly below private-sector expectations. Retail and food services sales, excluding autos, were up 0.8 percent, consistent with private-sector expectations. Motor vehicle sales fell 1.7 percent, and sales at gasoline stations jumped 2.6 percent. Sales at gasoline stations comprise about 10 percent of total retail sales.

“Two years after the worst recession in generations, our economy is strengthening and businesses are hiring again; today’s numbers are another sign of continued growth,” U.S. Commerce Secretary Gary Locke said. “But many American families and businesses are now facing an additional burden because of rising gas prices. This underlines our vulnerability to fluctuating oil markets and the need to improve domestic energy production and transition to a clean energy economy.”

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