



GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Washington, D.C. 20230

February 25, 2010

The Honorable Jack Reed
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510-3903

Dear Senator Reed:

Thank you for your letter to Secretary Locke providing information regarding a proposal to expand income tax relief benefits to civilian Federal employees serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. We appreciate your recognition of the important work undertaken by our commercial officers in the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service, and our other civil service personnel serving overseas.

It has been the policy of the Department of Commerce (Department) to place only volunteers in our foreign service positions in Iraq. Our civil service employees on detail in Iraq are also volunteers. A foreign service officer will fill a newly created commercial officer position in Afghanistan this summer. Department employees receive a special recognition package that has been successful in attracting quality candidates for these positions, and has allowed us to provide a robust commercial presence in this critical mission.

I am aware that the Department of the Treasury (Treasury) recently sent you a letter expressing technical concerns with the proposal. The Department would defer to Treasury as to these technical issues.

If you have any further questions, please contact me or April Boyd, Assistant Secretary for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, at (202) 482-3663.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cameron F. Kerry".

Cameron F. Kerry

Identical Letters Sent to:

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senate

The Honorable Ted Kaufman
United States Senate

The Honorable Tom Udall
United States Senate

The Honorable Mark Begich
United States Senate