

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 10, 2011

The Honorable Daniel Inouye
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Norman Dicks
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye, Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Cochran and Ranking Member Dicks:

As the Fiscal Year 2012 appropriations process moves forward, we write to request the removal of harmful language that is currently in the Senate passed version of H.R. 2112. Specifically, language in the Agriculture Appropriations bill and Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill that would prohibit funds to be used for Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-76 activities or the privatization of functions or activities currently performed by federal employees. We believe that these provisions, specifically in Title I of Agriculture Programs in Division A and Sections 212 and 505(a)(6) of Division B, should be removed in the final conference agreement.

As you know, OMB circular A-76 provides for public-private cost competitions for commercial activities, not those deemed to be inherently governmental, performed by the federal government. This language, if enacted into law, would further inhibit cost savings via such competitions or the transition of such activities or functions to the private sector. Public-private competition of commercial activities to determine the most efficient and cost effective provider has been supported by Administrations of both parties dating back to President Eisenhower. Over the years, numerous studies have shown these comparisons result in program improvement and cost savings, regardless of whether the competition is ultimately won by a contractor or government employees.

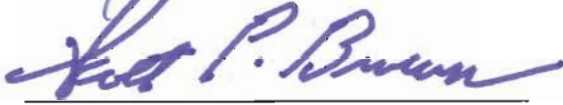
The federal government should not be prohibiting federal agencies from taking the appropriate steps to evaluate and reduce the size and scope of the federal government. In addition, with the national debt quickly approaching \$15 trillion, Congress should be encouraging agencies to find the most efficient ways to provide services and ultimately save taxpayer dollars. Unfortunately as the size and the scope of the federal government has grown, so too has government competition with private sector businesses. The role of the federal government should be to govern, not unfairly compete or duplicate services that are readily available in the private sector.

As negotiations continue regarding the consolidated Appropriation package, we urge the Conference Committee to ensure the final product promotes a leaner, more efficient federal government while stimulating growth in the private sector.

Sincerely,



John Thune



Scott P. Brown



Chuck Grassley



Michael B. Enzi



John Barrasso



Amy Klobuchar