



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**The Secretary of Commerce**  
Washington, D.C. 20230

May 17, 2019

The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney  
Vice Chair, Joint Economic Committee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Madam Vice Chair:

I am writing in response to your letter to the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) regarding BEA's efforts to measure and publish information on the distributional measures of income.

BEA's Office of the Chief Economist is leading research efforts to develop the means, methods, and processes necessary to publish regular measures of the distribution of personal income. BEA anticipates publishing prototype measures within calendar year 2020, after which it will seek public comments on the proposed methodology. We believe this plan is consistent with the language accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2019.

Producing regular and timely measures of the distribution of personal income presents some challenges largely related to the coverage and timely availability of the source data – most notably, the availability and access to timely tax data. As a result, BEA is exploring alternative methods and data sources.

Regarding new legislative authority and other resources to facilitate this work, we have no requests at this time. However, we do expect to have a much clearer idea of the full set of requirements for this work after completing the development of prototype statistics and identifying an approach for ongoing production of the distribution of personal income. We will share our findings upon completion of this work.

Finally, I would like to thank you for your words of commendation for the professionalism and expertise of BEA's staff. I fully concur with this sentiment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wilbur Ross".

Wilbur Ross