

UNITED STATES OFFICE OF
GOVERNMENT ETHICS



November 17, 2017

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate
706 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
United States Senate
511 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
United States Senate
531 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
United States Senate
709 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senate
330 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tammy Duckworth
United States Senate
524 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Blumenthal, Cantwell, Udall, Baldwin, Hassan, and Duckworth:

This is to follow up on our November 2, 2017 response to your letter dated October 26, 2017, requesting information about whether the U.S. Office of Government Ethics (OGE) has taken specific actions with regard to the Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross. By virtue of that response, we brought the matter to the attention of the Chief of the Ethics Law and Programs Division at the Department of Commerce. OGE received the attached response from Secretary Ross explaining that the information provided in his nominee public financial disclosure report was accurate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David J. Apol".

David J. Apol
Acting Director





THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
Washington, D.C. 20230

NOV 16 2017

Mr. David J. Apol
Acting Director and General Counsel
U.S. Office of Government Ethics
1201 New York Avenue, N.W. Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 2005-3917

Dear Mr. Apol:

This is to provide information to assist you in responding to a request from six members of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation for information regarding the financial disclosure report I filed as a nominee for the position of Secretary of Commerce.

The letter refers to an article from *Forbes* magazine by Dan Alexander dated November 14, 2017 (later updated) in which there is reference an estimate of my net worth and the creation of a trust that was allegedly used to transfer assets of mine to others shortly before my appointment as Secretary. This led to questions from the senators regarding the accuracy of the financial disclosure report I filed and questions about the nature of the trust I created.

Let me use this occasion to clarify some matters. The estimate of my wealth as reported in the press is not accurate; the accurate information is provided in my nominee public financial disclosure report (OGE Form 278).

With regard to the creation of trusts, there was no trust created by either myself or my spouse during the period between the election and my appointment as Secretary. Any statement to the contrary I made to the press was a result of a mistake or misunderstanding. At the time of my conversation with the reporter I was in the process of creating a trust as a mechanism to divest my assets in order to comply with my ethics agreement.

I hope this clarifies matters for you and helps you respond to the letter from members of the Senate Commerce Committee. If you have any additional questions or need additional information from me, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Wilbur L. Ross".

Wilbur L. Ross