

Draft Bilirakis Opening Statement – DOC Secretary Raimondo FY25 Budget Hearing

Good morning – I would like to welcome everyone to today’s hearing where we will be examining and discussing the Department of Commerce’s Fiscal Year 2025 budget request. I want to thank Secretary Raimondo for appearing before us and look forward to conducting important Congressional oversight of this agency as we look to fund ways to strengthen our economy and compete on the global stage.

This Committee has been active on both of these fronts. Last month, the House passed H.R. 6571, the Promoting Resilient Supply Chains Act led by Reps. Buchson and Blunt Rochester, which would establish a mapping program at the Department of Commerce to examine our supply chains to better prepare our economy for any future shocks that we may see. Monitoring these trends will help protect us from reliance on our nation’s enemies, and instead help industries to adapt quickly. The Department would also be tasked with partnering with the private sector to better understand vulnerabilities in our supply chains, including supply chains for emerging technologies, and provide recommendations for promoting emerging technologies and making critical supply chains more resilient and closer to home.

Secretary Raimondo, thank you for being here before us to discuss these issues. I’m interested to hear from you on these supply chain issues, as well as the state of our country’s global competition with China, and the status of our travel and tourism sector.

Last Congress, we worked on a bipartisan basis with Rep. Schakowsky to pass the Restoring Brand USA Act and the Visit America Act to ensure the U.S. remains a top destination for visitors around the globe, and that we have oversight mechanisms and a plan in place at Commerce to prepare the nation for the next decade in travel and tourism trends. I am concerned that the U.S. is starting to lag behind other top nations in the travel sector, and I look forward to discussing ways to modernize and advance our nation’s tourism priorities through your Department by reducing red tape and bureaucratic barriers, and instead embrace the power of our private sector and our great local economies.

Lastly, I hope to be able to discuss the continued importance of American leadership in emerging technologies, such as blockchain, A.I., and quantum computing. Our Subcommittee has again conducted bipartisan work on these topics, including passing H.R. 6572 the Deploying American Blockchains Act in May, which will direct the Department of Commerce to take action in promoting U.S. competitiveness in the deployment and use of blockchain technologies. We cannot cede American leadership in these fields, and it is critical that we continue to employ new strategies that let innovators thrive here in the United States. That also includes the critical infrastructure manufacturing necessary to develop these emerging technologies. Rep. Miller Meeks’ bill that we passed would do just that by finding pathways to increase our capacity for domestic manufacturing, reducing barriers to entry, and becoming less reliant on countries like China for critical components necessary for these innovations to continue.

With all of these pieces of legislation I hope we can get those past the Senate and across the finish line to the President’s desk. Secretary Raimondo, I look forward to hearing from you about how we can align these goals, secure American leadership, reduce red tape for industry stakeholders – we cannot let a “top-down” approach get in the way, and hope that we can instead let the American innovative economy thrive. The Budget needs to reflect these key priorities without breaking the bank, and I am interested to hear your perspective. With that I will yield back.