



October 6, 2011

The Honorable Francisco Sanchez
Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Under Secretary Sanchez,

I am writing on behalf of the U.S.-Libya Business Association. Our members are U.S. companies representing some of the largest investors in Libya and we are the only U.S. trade association focusing solely on the United States and Libya. We work to strengthen the bilateral relationship by facilitating economic and commercial ties between the two nations, creating U.S. jobs and deepening our ties with the Libyan people and government.

We are deeply concerned that the U.S. Department of Commerce is contemplating closing its U.S. Commercial Service (USCS) presence in Tripoli just as the U.S. has reopened its embassy, and is undertaking a government wide effort to engage in a free Libya. We urge you to re-open and fully staff a USCS section in Libya. In this time of budget cuts and scarce resources, the potential for increased U.S. exports to and renewed private sector interest in Libya justifies the cost.

Libya is at an historic crossroads, emerging from over four decades of tyranny and oppression, won through the courage and determination of the Libyan people. Commercial engagement is crucial to extending American innovation, technology, products, services, and best practices in transparency, commercial rule of law and human capital development in partnership with Libya's emerging civil society, private sector and transitional government.

Prior to the conflict, Libya was on course to spend up to \$325 billion on infrastructure projects in the next 5-10 years, including housing, universities, roads, a railroad, hospitals, power generation, water and sewers. As it emerges from war, the need for equipment for oil and gas production, materials and equipment for housing and infrastructure construction, agricultural products, and medical equipment and pharmaceuticals is even more urgent.

As a free Libya transitions to constitutionally based governance, there is no substitute for USCS expertise on the ground in-country. As U.S. companies go head to head with international competitors, we need a USCS in Libya to level the playing field by helping U.S. business target the most promising Libyan markets, promote their products and services to qualified buyers, meet the best distributors and agents, overcome potential barriers and engage in advocacy to support U.S. companies bidding on local tenders. U.S. companies have expressed to us how much they value the past work of the USCS in Libya and hope that that work will continue shortly.

Sincerely,

Charles W. Dittrich
Executive Director