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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,  
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

WEBSITE: <http://commerce.senate.gov>

July 15, 2018

The Honorable Peggy E. Gustafson  
Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue Northwest  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Inspector General Gustafson:

I write to request your independent review of the conclusion reached by the Commerce Department's Designated Agency Ethics Official (DAEO) that errors Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross made in his efforts to comply with his Ethics Agreement did not result in a violation of conflict of interest law.

In a letter to Secretary Ross dated July 12, 2018, Acting Director and General Counsel of the Office of Government Ethics (OGE) David J. Apol recounted instances in which Secretary Ross is alleged to have divested from his assets in a manner inconsistent with the Ethics Agreement he signed during the confirmation process. OGE's letter states that Secretary Ross completed divestitures of Invesco Ltd. stock in December 2017, despite representing in his November 1, 2017, Certification of Ethics Agreement Compliance that he had completed such divestitures. OGE indicated that Secretary Ross apparently neglected to consult with the Commerce Department's DAEO or other ethics staff prior to the sale of Invesco Ltd. stock.

The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation takes compliance with ethics rules, especially by top officials under its jurisdiction, seriously. While I appreciate the complexity of Secretary Ross' divestiture commitments and do not dispute the subsequent conclusion reached by the DAEO that no violation of conflict of interest laws occurred, an independent review of this conclusion is a necessary step to ensure confidence in the process. I appreciate your attention to this request and would ask that you provide the Committee with the results of your review at its conclusion.

Sincerely,



JOHN THUNE  
Chairman

cc: The Honorable Bill Nelson, Ranking Member