



A Message from the Director, U.S. Census Bureau:

Dear Company Representative,

We are writing to ask for your help with the U.S. Census Bureau's **2012 Annual Retail Trade Report**. Summary statistics from this report give an up-to-date picture of the U.S. economic activity in the retail trade sector and provide the nation's policymakers and business leaders with measures of this important economic sector.

In order to produce official national estimates of value added, gross output, and to improve the quality of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)-by state accounts, this year's report form requests additional information about your business' operating expenses.

The Census Bureau is determined to provide the most accurate and useful data possible. To achieve that standard, we need participation from all types of businesses, including your business. We acknowledge that completing any report takes time and thought. For this reason, we urge you to view participation not only as a public service, but also as a sensible long-term investment - an investment that returns benefits to you by laying the foundation for sound economic policies and successful business decisions.

This report is **MANDATORY** and **must be returned by the due date shown on the front of the form**. Title 13, United States Code, Sections 182, 224, and 225 require your participation. Section 9 of Title 13 requires that the Census Bureau keep this report **strictly confidential**. Your information is used only to develop summary statistics that do not reveal the individual activities of your company. Under the same law, information cannot be used for taxation, regulation, or investigation and are exempt from release under the Freedom of Information Act. Further, copies of your response retained in your files are immune from legal process.

Reporting instructions are included on the enclosed form, and estimates are acceptable. You may report via mail, fax, or Internet. Please see the front page of the form for pertinent information concerning each of these options.

To complete your form online now, please go to econhelp.census.gov/arts and click on the **"Report Online"** button. Your Username and Password are located on the front page of the form.

If you have any questions or concerns about completing this report, please contact the Annual Retail Branch directly at 301-763-2747 or toll free at 1-800-327-4389 (**select option 2**) weekdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Eastern time. You also may access our Web site at econhelp.census.gov/arts for information about electronic reporting and answers to **Frequently Asked Questions**.

THANK YOU in advance for ensuring that the results of the 2012 Annual Retail Trade Report are comprehensive, timely, and reliable.

Enclosures