

Senator Dan Sullivan
Questions for the Record
Department of Commerce Nominee Erin Walsh

Questions for Elizabeth Erin Walsh, Nominee to be Director General of the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service and Assistant Secretary for Global Markets, Department Of Commerce:

Seafood Exports

Alaska's seafood exports represent 55% of total U.S. seafood exports, and make up roughly two-thirds of the value of Alaska's seafood—over \$3 billion annually. In 2015, Alaska exported to 102 different countries. In recent years, we've experienced challenges as seafood consumption in Asian markets change, and U.S. exports face pressure from farmed and other low-priced alternatives sourced internationally.

What specific steps will you take to promote the export of Alaskan seafood in global markets? What improvements can be made in our discussions and strategies with the markets in which the Foreign Commercial Service operates?

ANSWER: If confirmed, I look forward to finding ways to address the current trade imbalance in fisheries so that our fishery resources create more jobs here in America. In light of the fact that Trade Promotion Authority now includes fish and fishery products, I look forward to collaborating with colleagues throughout government – including NOAA and USTR – on a range of export issues such as this one where the International Trade Administration (ITA) and specifically the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service can add value. To ensure efficiency and effectiveness, it is critical we work together and leverage each other's capabilities to ensure the competitiveness of U.S. industries.

General

One of the core missions of the Commerce Department is to promote U.S. companies and exports. How will you improve upon the existing efforts to promote opportunities for American companies abroad?

ANSWER: U.S. exports face significant challenges in many markets. The causes of market obstruction and closure are numerous including: high tariffs; subsidies provided to foreign producers giving them unfair advantage over their U.S. competitors; blocking or unreasonably restricting the flow of digital data and services; theft of trade secrets; as well as non-tariff barriers – such as unnecessary regulations on particular items – to limit competition, including in the services sector.

If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to increase exports by breaking down long-standing trade barriers and fostering increased access for American goods in foreign markets. I intend to work closely with my colleagues within ITA and the Secretary to use all possible tools to encourage other countries to give U.S. producers fair, reciprocal access to their markets.

There have been widely reported examples of China denying access to U.S. industry and investment when Chinese companies are granted access to the U.S. market in similar situations. Specifically, how will you improve opportunities for American business in China?

ANSWER:

China has pursued policies that has disadvantaged American companies and workers. If confirmed, I will use every available tool to counter restrictive and unfair trade policies of those who pledge allegiance to free trade while violating its core principles. I believe in free and fair trade and I pledge to work with my colleagues in the Trump Administration and the U.S. Congress to restore a level playing field.

What specific changes or improvements will you implement in the mission of the Foreign Commercial Service that will create better conditions for the promotion of U.S. enterprise abroad?

ANSWER:

I support the International Trade Administration's mission of promoting trade and investment, advancing the competitiveness of U.S. industries, and ensuring fair trade through the rigorous enforcement of our trade laws and agreements. Furthermore, I will assist with the critical role the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service plays in executing our trade laws, particularly for US small and medium-sized businesses.

Would you support an expansion of the CFIUS mandate to include market access and reciprocity as factors considered by the committee?

ANSWER:

CFIUS is an important statute that provides a valuable tool that allows us to advance U.S. national security, foreign policy, and economic objectives. If confirmed, I will work within the Department of Commerce, with the Treasury Department – which leads CFIUS -- and the rest of the interagency as appropriate, to support a vigorous and thorough CFIUS review process which must include consideration of market access and reciprocity as important analytics in our national security calculus.