

January 19, 2022

The Honorable Gina M. Raimondo
Secretary
Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

RE: Environmental Sector Workforce Development to Enhance U.S. Export Opportunities
ETTAC Recommendation 2021-04

Dear Secretary Raimondo:

The Environmental Technologies Trade Advisory Committee (ETTAC) is a federally established committee whose purpose is to advise on the policies and procedures of the U.S. government that affect environmental technology, goods, and services exports. This letter is to urge you to collaborate across U.S. government agencies to address significant challenges related to the aging environmental services and technology sector workforce. This issue is directly linked to our capabilities to develop, deploy, and adopt innovation in the communities across our nation and the world.

Similar to many technology-based fields, the growing environmental technology and services sector faces significant challenges in recruiting, training, and retaining employees. These challenges are made more significant by the aging professional workforce and lack of technical training and certifications to build key skills and competencies to attract younger workers.

Here are several suggestions to improve and leverage the private sector's environmental technologies and services sector workforce priorities to more fully realize the export objectives of the United States:

- Build on the Memorandum of Understanding between EPA and USDA on water workforce issues to include other environmental media and disciplines (e.g., air, climate, resilience, and waste) and USG partners, such as Department of Commerce, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Department of the Interior and its agencies to leverage expertise and collaboration in growing and integrating programs on sustainability and the federal and private workforce that can be deployed across the U.S. and as well as export markets.
- Partner with EPA and the U.S. Department of Labor to broaden the current technical training and community college degrees' programs to improve the skills and competencies for a successful environmental services and technologies workforce transition that promotes more innovation and effective sustainability and environmental management that can enhance the export of environmental technologies and services.
- Engage the Department of Homeland Security to discuss approaches to increasing available visas (e.g., H1B and others) to bring required technical experts from the international community, as domestic workers are trained to establish export business collaborations with the home countries of the technical experts.
- Identify priority markets and associated workforce needs for which the private environmental technology and services sector can contribute to building smart, modern, resilient infrastructure

and provide market intelligence to ease market entry and bolster exports for U.S. environmental technology companies in specific international markets of interest.

- Expand federal funding to accomplish the above objectives.

We recommend scheduling a roundtable with industry leaders and the interagency community to outline approaches to begin to propose solutions to these issues and stand ready to assist you in this effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Decker', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

William Decker

ETTAC Chair