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From: Gloria Gutiérrez
U.S. Department of Commerce

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Chief Financial Officer
Assistant Secretary for Administration

Washington, D.C. 20230

JUL 14 1995

Ms. Patricia S. Fleming
National AIDS Policy Coordinator
Executive Office of the President
750 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Ms. Fleming:

Enclosed is the Department of Commerce's report for the National Plan on HIV/AIDS being developed by the Interdepartmental Task Force on AIDS.

Sincerely,

for Gloria Gutiérrez
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Administration

**U.S. Department of Commerce
Report to the National AIDS Policy Coordinator
Departmental HIV/AIDS-Related Activities
And Plan**

I. Introduction

The mission of the Department of Commerce is to foster, serve and promote the Nation's economic development and technological advancement.

The primary organizations of the Department are: the Office of the Secretary, the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the Bureau of Export Administration, the Bureau of the Census, the Economic Development Administration, the International Trade Administration, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, the National Technical Information Service, the Office of Economic Affairs, the Office of the Inspector General, the Patent and Trademark Office and the United States Travel and Tourism Administration.

II. Department and Operating Unit Activities

The Department of Commerce does not engage in direct HIV/AIDS research activities. However, a number of our programs have an impact on HIV/AIDS research activities. For example:

- global telecommunications technologies developed through the programs of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration aid in the dissemination of developments in HIV/AIDS research;
- data collection and analysis programs conducted by the Bureau of the Census and the Bureau of Economic Analysis affect the distribution of funds and other resources for private and public health initiatives, including HIV/AIDS research, treatment and service programs;
- scientific standards, methodologies and technologies developed through the programs of the National Institute of Standards and Technology affect laboratory procedures and equipment calibration at HIV/AIDS research facilities; and
- the Patent and Trademark Office Biotechnology Examining Groups review and research patent applications for immunological testing apparatus and processes, apparatus for chemical and clinical analysis, immunoassay and pharmaceutical compositions, apparatus and processes related to sterilization, cell biology and blood and blood products.

III. Existing Financial assistance and extramural programs:

The Department has funded biotechnology development projects through NIST's Advanced Technology Program. Data extracted from the Federal Assistance Awards System (FAADS) indicates that NIST is the only Commerce agency to provide HIV/AIDS-related funding.

In October 1994, the Patent and Trademark Office, in conjunction with the National Science Foundation, unveiled an AIDS-related patent database. The text and images of approximately 1,600 patents are now available to researchers and other citizens via the Internet. To address the critical national need relative to the dissemination of current information about HIV/AIDS, the Patent and Trademark Office made an exception to its general policy that the full patent text and images will be made available only in its Public Search Rooms and Libraries.

The National Technical Information Service has participated in the dissemination of HIV/AIDS-related training and technical materials.

IV. Objectives

Our immediate and most directly relevant objective is to preserve the Advanced Technology Program (ATP), which has been targeted for elimination by several members of Congress. ATP, which provides funding to small and/or start-up research and development companies, promotes advances in biotechnology that might otherwise never reach the marketplace. Resources for HIV/AIDS related activities are not specifically earmarked within the ATP budget.

Our broader objective is to foster the development of information and medical technologies with multiple applications to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The Department is dedicated to continuing efforts to address this crisis through economic development assistance to U.S. biotechnical and telecommunications businesses, research incentives such as the Advanced Technology Program and the issuance of patents for technological advancements.