

Mandate for Leadership

The Conservative Promise

Project 2025

Presidential Transition Project (Part 3)

“The 2025 Presidential Transition Project is the conservative movement’s unified effort to be ready for the next conservative Administration to govern at 12:00 noon, January 20, 2025.”

Chapter 21 of [Project 2025](#), beginning on page 663, focuses on the strategies to transform the Department of Commerce and Chapter 23, beginning on page 717, discusses the plans for the Export Import Bank. These sections continue the structural changes and policy initiatives that redirects agency initiatives and resources towards conservative philosophical objectives.

Who Wrote It?

Project 2025 is more than just a policy blueprint. It also includes robust [recruiting, vetting, and staffing components](#) designed to fill roles and begin implementing the policy initiatives on “day 1.” It is important to identify the authors of the agency chapters, as they are the people likely positioned to take leadership roles in an upcoming Administration, at the same Federal agencies they are writing about, to implement these recommendations.

Thomas F. Gilman served as Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Administration and Chief Financial Officer of the U.S. Department of Commerce in the Trump Administration and former CEO of Chrysler Financial. Currently, he is a Director of the [American Center for Law and Justice \(ACLJ\)](#) and Chairman of [Torngat Metals](#).

[Veronique de Rugy](#) is the George Gibbs Chair in Political Economy and Senior Research Fellow at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University. She is the author of a [weekly opinion column](#) for the Creators Syndicate, writes regular columns for Reason magazine, and blogs about economics at [National Review’s](#) The Corner.

Department of Commerce:

In *Project 2025: A Mandate for Leadership*, significant changes are recommended for the U.S. Department of Commerce, focusing on reducing its size, shifting priorities, and

countering perceived inefficiencies. The overarching goal of these recommendations is to align the Department of Commerce with a conservative agenda, streamline its functions, and focus more on supporting American businesses and national security concerns. While some of these goals are positive, such as a refocused effort around competitiveness with China, many of the proposals would politicize the department and reduce the effectiveness or completely eliminate many offices focused on environmental protection and economic development for underserved communities.

Abolishing the Economic Development Administration (EDA): The EDA is charged with investing in communities to encourage and enable growth and innovation in the private sector, with particular focus on distressed or underserved areas. Their investment priorities provide an overarching framework to ensure its competitive grant investment portfolio – ranging from planning to infrastructure construction -- contributes to local efforts to build, improve, or better leverage economic assets that allow businesses to succeed and regional economies to prosper and become more resilient.

The plan suggests eliminating the EDA, which the author considered “wasteful,” and distributing many of its services to the private sector. This is consistent with the agenda that has been driven by the Heritage Foundation since its inception, which strongly opposes many of the principles that drive EDA’s investment decisions, including:

1. **Equity:** Economic development planning or implementation projects that advance equity across America through investments that directly benefit one or more traditionally [underserved populations](#), including but not limited to women, Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islanders or underserved communities within [geographies](#) that have been systemically and/or systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic prosperity such as Tribal Lands, [Persistent Poverty Counties](#), and rural areas with demonstrated, historical underservice.
2. **Environmentally-Sustainable Development:** Economic development planning or implementation projects that help address the climate crisis including through the development and implementation of [green products](#), [green processes](#), including green infrastructure, [green buildings](#), and [green places](#), including an emphasis on density in the vicinity of the development.

Dismantling the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA): One of the most substantial recommendations is to break up NOAA with its functions being privatized, eliminated, or transferred to other agencies or to the states. Intending to pessimistically disclaim climate science and attack what the authors describe as the “*climate change alarm industry*,” this would undermine critical climate and weather-related services. This is particularly dangerous given the recent destruction realized by millions of Americans affected by hurricane Helene and many other storms strengthened by climate change. The Biden Administration’s acknowledgement of the disproportionate impact climate change has on underserved communities and has utilized NOAA to implement twelve (12) of the Department of [Commerce’s thirteen \(13\) Justice 40 Initiative programs](#).

Export/Import Bank:

The Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIM) facilitates international trade for businesses of all sizes across the nation, offering a range of tailored financing solutions and export credit insurance programs designed to mitigate risks and enhance competitiveness. Through its working capital loan guarantees, EXIM assists businesses to secure financing from lenders, using their export-related accounts receivable and inventory as collateral. This access to working capital empowers businesses to fulfill large export orders, expand their international presence, and take advantage of growth opportunities abroad. EXIM also offers export credit insurance to protect businesses against nonpayment by foreign buyers, giving businesses the confidence to explore new markets and extend credit terms to international customers, without the fear of financial loss due to default.

EXIM has dedicated programs specifically designed to increase participation among minority- and women-owned businesses, ensuring they can access international markets. For example, on April 19, 2024 EXIM Bank announced the launch of an innovative new product, developed with the Bank's [Minority and Women-Owned Business Division \(MWOB\)](#), to support and empower MWOB companies to grow their export business: [Equity Express Select: Grow Revenues Through Exports with EXIM](#). Equity Express Select's (EQS) in-house customer service team will guide companies through every step of the process, from explaining policy benefits and reviewing qualifications to streamlining the application and addressing any concerns you may have along the way. Some of the benefits of the new program/ include:

- 95% coverage of invoices
- Whole-turnover, insures any buyers getting credit from exporter
- EXIM reviews and approves all buyers
- No deductible
- No application or policy issuance fees
- Dedicated in-house servicing team
- Pay-as-you-ship premiums

If Project 2025's proposal to abolish the Export-Import Bank (EXIM) were implemented, it would remove this key source of financing and risk mitigation that supports the international expansion of small and minority-owned firms. that rely on these loan guarantees and export credit insurance to compete globally, especially when traditional financing is unavailable. Without EXIM, minority-owned businesses might struggle to access the necessary capital to explore overseas markets, reducing their ability to grow and diversify their revenue streams.

Conclusion:

Overall, Project 2025's proposed policies could lead to reduced support, increased competition, and greater economic challenges for minority-owned businesses. The elimination of affirmative action and minority-focused programs, combined with broader deregulation and changes to labor laws, could create a more challenging

environment for these businesses to thrive and compete. The proposal includes plans to abandon affirmative action and minority contracting programs that have historically provided critical opportunities for minority-owned businesses to compete for and secure government contracts.

The attack of regulatory protections for minority businesses would remove protections that help ensure fair competition and prevent discriminatory practices. Finally, small and minority-owned businesses, already more financially vulnerable, are likely to face greater challenges in a market increasingly dominated by larger corporations with more resources.