

**TESTIMONY OF
WANDA FELTON
NOMINEE, FIRST VICE PRESIDENT AND VICE CHAIR
EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON BANKING,
HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS
September 10, 2013**

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Crapo and the members of this committee, thank you for inviting me to testify today. I am extremely gratified that President Obama has nominated me to serve a second term as First Vice President and Vice Chair of the Export-Import Bank of the United States. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you to continue growing exports and supporting U.S. jobs.

I also want to acknowledge the presence and support of my mother Maro Lester, my husband Michael Owens, and other family members who are here today.

Ex-Im Bank is the official export credit agency of the United States. The Bank's mission is straightforward – to promote U.S. job growth and job retention through exports. The Bank provides financing to help U.S. companies expand into overseas markets when financing is not available in the private sector. Ex-Im Bank also steps in when there is a need to level the playing field because U.S. exporters are facing foreign competitors with financing from their governments. The goal is to take financing off the table as a competitive factor so that American companies can compete for export sales *fair and square*. Importantly, Ex-Im Bank operates at *no cost* to taxpayers. The Bank generated \$1.1 billion for the U.S. taxpayers in FY 2012 alone.

Ex-Im Bank is central to the National Export Initiative to double exports by 2015. President Obama's goal in announcing this initiative was to stimulate job growth and position our economy for sustained competitiveness and prosperity. I am passionate about this mission, and there is good reason for my enthusiasm.

"*Made in the USA*" remains the world's strongest brand. However, the global economy has never been more competitive. I believe that we have a responsibility to do what we can to help American companies win the battle for international market share. In fiscal 2012, Ex-Im Bank supported an estimated 255,000 American jobs at 3,600 companies.

During my first term, I traveled to 20 cities and towns across the United States to engage small businesses and other business leaders in an effort to promote the President's *National Export Initiative*. If confirmed, I will continue this outreach because small businesses are the bedrock of our economy and their prosperity is essential to job creation.

In fiscal 2012, Ex-Im Bank authorized \$6.1 billion of direct support for small business exporters. This represented 88 percent of 2012 transaction volume. When indirect exports are taken into account, Ex-Im Bank provided a total of \$7.5 billion of support for small businesses.

It is a fact that large exporters win sales that feed a huge but hidden chain of small and middle-market suppliers. Ex-Im Bank recognizes the potential of this economic leverage and has sought to amplify it through new programs.

In addition to small business outreach, I led Ex-Im Bank's effort to increase commercial engagement between the United States and sub-Saharan Africa. Ex-Im Bank has a congressional mandate to promote trade with Africa, and the President has made this a centerpiece of his trade policy.

I have worked to advance our congressional mandate and promote the President's agenda. I worked closely with Ex-Im Bank's Sub-Saharan Africa Advisory Committee to develop a strategic plan to help the Bank achieve more robust results in Africa — *without* taking undue risk.

I look at every transaction through the lens of financial merit. Is the transaction creditworthy? Is there a reasonable assurance of repayment? That is *always* my starting point.

For 15 years I worked in private equity. Many of my clients invested in small and middle-market growth companies so I helped steer capital to small businesses, including companies owned by women and minority entrepreneurs. During those years, I also did business in Latin America, India, Africa and parts of Asia. These are some of Ex-Im Bank's most important markets.

Let me close by noting that I began my career at Ex-Im Bank. I learned credit analysis at the Bank and have worked in finance ever since. I have approximately 25 years of experience in credit and financial analysis which brings a perspective that is valued by board members and career staff.

Finally, it is impossible for me to convey how much it has meant to me to be able to return to Ex-Im Bank. The Bank has changed dramatically under Chairman Hochberg's leadership. In many ways, it is unrecognizable from the place I worked in the early 1980s—the commercial vitality and energy are palpable. Ex-Im Bank is reaching many more small businesses and supporting far more U.S. jobs than ever before.

However, one thing has not changed—Ex-Im Bank has world-class employees. They take their fiduciary duty to protect the public trust very seriously and these public servants care deeply about Ex-Im Bank's mission. They could work anywhere making a lot more money, yet they choose government service. They work long hours to provide financing that keeps American workers employed. It is *personal* to them.

If confirmed, it would be a *privilege* to continue working with such a fine group of people.

Thank you.