Census data is the building block of market research that our country’s retail sector is built upon; however this essential information is being unnecessarily threatened by cuts to the Census budget. We are asking our friends in Congress to provide funding for the US Census Bureau to help our nation’s businesses serve our communities in the most efficient and productive way possible.

Retail real estate is an essential part of economic growth in every community in this country. The International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) represents more than 50,000 members across the United States. In 2011, ICSC members provided 12.1 million jobs, representing 9.3% of total employment – 1 out of every 11 jobs. Our industry also contributed $2.36 trillion in retail sales and provided $138 billion in sales tax revenue for state and local governments.

Many ICSC members rely heavily upon census data to create development plans necessary to establish and update shopping centers. Retailers, developers and public officials throughout the nation depend on census data to make educated choices for community planning decisions.

Should the funding for the Census be cut significantly, there are sure to be significant ramifications for our industry, placing vital data collection programs in jeopardy. There is the potential for:

- Inaccurate growth or sales forecasting of marketplace elements or forces
- Incorrect supply chain planning (over/under-investment)
- Incorrect infrastructure and urban/suburban planning (investments)
- Incorrect geographic allocation of community expenses/investments
- Misaligned facilities (facility or mix isn’t right for the market)
- Wrong timing for opening or expansion of a new facility
- Incorrect facility positioning for trade area characteristics (area has transitioned in ages, incomes, ethnicities, etc. since last census data).
- Inappropriate/inefficient marketing or merchandising strategies
- Missed opportunities for serving the community effectively