Real gross domestic product (GDP) declined 6.3 percent in the fourth quarter of 2008 after declining 0.5 percent in the third quarter, according to the “final” estimates from the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

**Gross Domestic Product**
The decrease in real GDP reflected:

- A sharp downturn in exports
- A continuing decline in consumer spending
- A larger decrease in business investment, mainly in equipment and software
- A continuing decline in housing

Corporate Profits
Fourth-quarter profits fell 16.5 percent, the largest decline since the fourth quarter of 1953. Financial corporate profits fell 59 percent; nonfinancial corporate profits fell 11 percent.