

United States Senate

June 29, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, and Leader McCarthy:

We write to express the need for additional funding to be provided to the Economic Development Administration (EDA)'s programs in a future legislative economic recovery package responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. We believe that Congress must provide additional robust resources toward these programs to assist the hardest hit and most economically distressed communities in America.

For many years, EDA has provided valuable federal support for a variety of investments, in both rural and urban communities, to help drive locally organized economic development that capitalizes on the unique natural, historic, and cultural assets throughout the country. In addition, these funds have helped develop new industries, build vital infrastructure, and enhance economic drivers like tourism. Given the current economic situation, we also ask that any legislation to extend these investments continue to eliminate the local funding match requirement, as we did in the CARES Act, as well as significantly invest in developing, marketing, and promoting our tourism markets. Tourism is one of the hardest hit sectors of the economy and a top economic driver in each of our states and the EDA provides an efficient means to distribute funds given the agency's existing authority to support this industry. Organizations such as destination marketing organizations (DMOs) are vital to ensuring the best transmission of information on travel opportunities that are available, and how those locations and situations will be different, and safe, in the times ahead.

We are asking for more robust support of these programs because there is economic pain and need for relief in communities throughout our nation. States, localities, and economic development organizations need these investments to help rehabilitate their economies, expand for the future, and help put more of our citizens back to work. This is especially true where whole industries have been decimated by the inability of travelers, both foreign and domestic, to visit our attractions, hotels, and restaurants. A dedication of additional funds to these important sectors would also go to help in managing the cleanliness and sanitation of their sites to help

protect travelers, including educating visitors about the precautionary measures that localities and businesses have put in place.

The EDA's record of investing in vital infrastructure is another reason for why this funding is so necessary. Infrastructure such as broadband, water systems, and transportation projects can have a dramatic multiplier effect in helping reshape and broaden the economic vitality of communities both big and small, including our nation's many tribal communities.

While the CARES Act provided a vital initial infusion of EDA funding, your support of this request will help further diversify economies, assist in needed workforce development, and enhance quality of life through a more robust economic recovery, especially in rural America.

We appeal to you to seriously consider this request as you further negotiate and develop COVID-19 response legislation. We appreciate your attention to this important matter. Due to the closure of many Senate offices during the coronavirus outbreak, physical signatures are unavailable. The listed senators have asked to be signatories to this letter.

Sincerely,

Senator Catherine Cortez Masto
Senator Amy Klobuchar
Senator Thomas R. Carper
Senator Kirsten Gillibrand
Senator Angus S. King, Jr.
Senator Jeffrey A. Merkley
Senator Robert Menendez
Senator Jack Reed
Senator Sheldon Whitehouse
Senator Ron Wyden
Senator Dianne Feinstein
Senator Jacky Rosen
Senator Elizabeth Warren
Senator Margaret Wood Hassan
Senator Edward J. Markey
Senator Tim Kaine