

March XX, 2018

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
142 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Shaheen:

As you begin work preparing the Fiscal Year 2019 (FY19) Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, we urge you to include robust funding for the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and its vital grant programs.

Since 1965, EDA has helped local and regional stakeholders address the economic and infrastructure needs of communities across the country, focusing on private sector job creation and economic growth in distressed areas.

With a modest budget, EDA programs have developed a record of making strategic investments and building community and regional partnerships to expand business in areas such as advanced manufacturing, science, health care, and technology. Between FY12 and FY16, EDA generated nearly \$29 billion in private investments and created about 226,393 jobs through nearly \$1.4 billion of public investments in locally-driven economic development projects.

Many communities, especially those in rural areas, have benefited from EDA grants to support the job skills training, technical assistance, and infrastructure improvements needed to attract new businesses and ensure existing businesses have the opportunity to adapt to changing market circumstances. EDA has invested nearly 60 percent of its funds in rural areas since FY12, which has leveraged an estimated \$13.7 billion in private investment in these communities.

EDA is useful in supporting job creation and innovation, particularly in distressed and disadvantaged communities. This aligns with the Administration's goals of job creation and rebuilding America's infrastructure. The agency is also a great tool that helps small businesses recover and communities rebuild critical infrastructure and economic development assets following natural disasters.

As Congress has done in past fiscal years, we encourage you to include robust funding for the Economic Development Administration and its grant programs in the FY19 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. We look forward to working with you to ensure the success of the EDA, which has an exceptional record of supporting local communities across the nation to cost-effectively promote economic development.

Sincerely,