DRAFT LETTER TO BE SENT TO YOUR MEMBER OF CONGRESS IN MARCH ON LETTERHEAD

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March X, 2022

The Honorable XXXX

U.S. Congress

Washington DC 20515 (House) /20510 (Senate)

**RE: FY23 CJS Appropriations for EDA Partnership Planning Grants and RE: EDA Reauthorization**

Dear Representative [name],

On behalf of [my organization], I want to bring to your attention the need for additional funding in FY23 for U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) Partnership Planning grants. I also encourage you to support EDA Reauthorization during the current session of Congress.

**FY23 EDA Appropriations – Increase Partnership Planning Grants**

Over the past five years, while overall EDA funding has increased substantially through annual appropriations, along with historic increases for the agency in the CARES Act and the American Rescue Plan Act, EDA Partnership Planning funds for EDA’s core local partners -- the Economic Development Districts (EDDs) -- have remained nearly flat. **Action is needed by Congress to provide no less than $50 million in directed FY23 funding for EDA Partnership Planning grants**.

Although Congress modestly increased EDA Partnership Planning grants by $1 million from FY21 to FY22, this increase was the first increase of its kind in many years, and does not begin to adequately support or keep pace with EDA’s exponentially increasing overall budget. As EDA’s overall budget has increased, in turn, increasing administrative demands have been placed on EDA-designated Economic Development Districts at the local levels. EDDs are facing growing challenges related to administering increasing volumes of projects, increasing federal grant application complexity, inflationary challenges, and insufficient staff capacity. When overall EDA funds increase without similar relative increases for EDA’s core local partners, a heavy administrative burden is placed on the same communities that EDA is designed to support.

The nearly 400 federally-designated Economic Development Districts nationwide (sometimes referred to locally as Councils of Government, Local Development Districts, Planning and Development Districts, or by other similar names). These entities are EDA’s core institutional partners at the local level. EDDs support critical functions related to planning and implementing locally-driven projects, local stakeholder coordination, and leveraging and linking local, state, and federal funding sources to ensure the success of EDA projects. EDDs are also tasked with carrying out EDA-mandated responsibilities related to facilitating local and regional economic development planning. The local planning process ensures that subsequent federal investments from EDA and other sources are strategic, and that federal funds are carefully stewarded.

In my own community in [city/region], my [organization] serves just such a role. For example, the [project name] project which [delivers outcome] would not have been possible without EDD Partnership Planning support.

**EDA Reauthorization**

Congressional action is also needed on **EDA Reauthorization** during the current session of Congress. EDA has not been reauthorized for 17 years. The reauthorization process is imperative to modernizing the agency and to ensuring that it continues to serve its intended purpose and steward federal funds in an intentional and impactful manner. Within EDA reauthorization legislation, I encourage you to increase the authorized funding level for EDA **Partnership Planning** **grants** to at least **$100 million**. I also encourage you to ensure that each individual EDA-designated Economic Development District is authorized to receive **no less than $150,000 annually** in EDA Partnership Planning dollars. Finally, EDA Partnership Planning grants should be provided at **90% federal cost share,** and no more than **10% local match.**

Thank you for your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

XYZ