

June 5, 2025

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chair
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Collins, Vice Chair Murray, Chair Moran, and Ranking Member Van Hollen,

On behalf of communities across the country, the undersigned members of the EDA Stakeholders Coalition encourage the Committee to strongly oppose the proposed elimination of the Economic Development Administration (EDA) in the President's Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Budget Request. The Committee should instead support full funding of at least \$595 million, as authorized by the recently enacted *Thomas R. Carper Water Resources Development Act of 2024*, which reauthorized and strengthened EDA programs with strong bipartisan support.

Since 1965, EDA has helped local and regional stakeholders across the country address pressing economic development needs, with an emphasis on supporting job creation, providing disaster relief, and mitigating economic distress in rural and underserved areas. Eliminating EDA would dismantle a proven, cost-effective agency that not only delivers long-term regional growth, but also generates a remarkable return on investment: for every \$1 invested by EDA, \$15 is leveraged in additional capital. This multiplier effect highlights the agency's pivotal role in driving sustainable economic transformation nationwide, particularly during periods of constrained federal resources.

EDA's flexible, locally driven approach empowers communities to respond effectively to economic shocks, recover from natural disasters, and build competitive, future-ready economies tailored to their unique needs. Investments are guided by regionally developed Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDS), ensuring alignment with broader goals and strong local support—both physical and financial. This collaborative framework fosters coordinated, high-impact development rooted in local priorities.

The Economic Development Administration's programs have been particularly effective at reaching rural communities to fight population loss and economic decline. These investments are critical as rural depopulation often triggers a negative chain reaction where a 1 percentage-point decline in population leads to a 2-3 percentage-point decline in business startups, further accelerating economic decline. The agency has effectively leveraged strategic partnerships, for example, collaborating with USDA Rural Development to create joint resource guides to help community organizations access resources and build strategies to boost economic development in rural America. EDA's programs provide rural communities with the tools needed to reverse concerning demographic and economic trends.

In today's rapidly evolving global economy, federal leadership is crucial to help communities nationwide adapt and thrive. We urge all Committee members to support EDA funding for FY26 at or above the recently authorized level of \$595 million to continue fostering sustainable economic development.

Sincerely,

The undersigned members of the EDA Stakeholders Coalition:

Development District Association of Appalachia (DDAA)

Greater New Orleans, Inc.

International Economic Development Council

Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)

Main Street America

National Association of Counties

National Association of Development Organizations

National Association of Regional Councils

National League of Cities

Rural Organizing

Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition (RVCC)