

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 17, 2021

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin  
Chair  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Agriculture,  
Rural Development, Food and Drug  
Administration, and Related Agencies  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Hoeven  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Agriculture,  
Rural Development, Food and Drug  
Administration, and Related Agencies  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Baldwin and Ranking Member Hoeven:

As the Subcommittee develops the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we urge you to include \$37 million for the USDA's Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) program. RBDG supports the development and growth of rural small and emerging businesses with fewer than 50 employees and less than \$1 million in gross revenues. This funding is especially critical now as communities across the country recover from the economic impacts of the pandemic.

Since launching in 2015, RBDG funding has provided support for planning, technical assistance, job training, and other business development needs in rural areas in all fifty states. RBDG's Enterprise Grants focus on the development of small businesses and expansion of networks, including through business counseling and training; acquisition or development of land, easements, or rights of way; the capitalization of revolving loan funds; distance learning for job training and advancement; and rural transportation improvement. RBDG's Opportunity Grants support a variety of activities, such as identifying and analyzing business opportunities; conducting regional, community, and local economic development planning and coordination; leadership development; and establishing centers for training for rural businesses.


Small businesses provide the majority of jobs in rural communities, yet often have less access to credit and capital when compared with urban areas. Investing in our rural businesses, such as through the RBDG program, ensures that communities in every corner of the country can continue to thrive and have a strong local economy.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



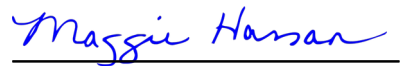
Tina Smith  
United States Senator



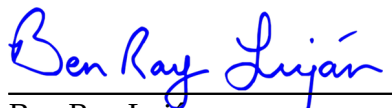
Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



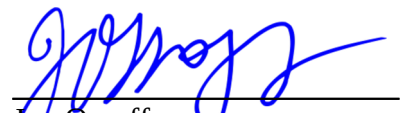
Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan  
United States Senator



Jon Ossoff  
United States Senator