

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 8, 2024

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
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 Heinrich and Ranking Member Hoeven:


As the Subcommittee develops the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 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.

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 cultivate a strong local economy. In FY2024, the RBDG program received \$20.535 million. Given the importance of small businesses in driving economic activity in rural communities across the country, we ask that you provide \$37 million for FY25.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.


Sincerely,



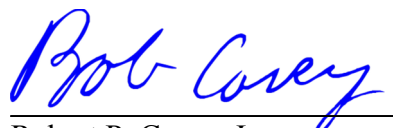
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



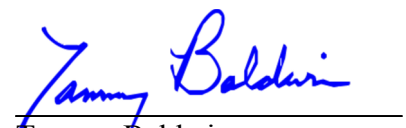
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



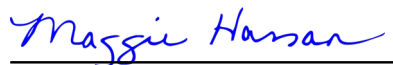
Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



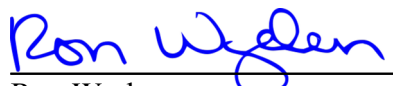
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



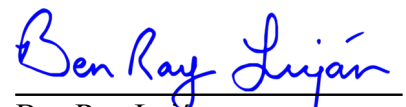
Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



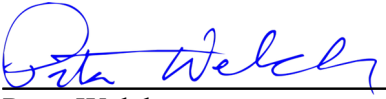
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



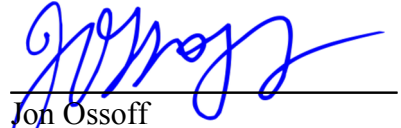
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Peter Welch", written over a horizontal line.

Peter Welch
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Jon Ossoff", written over a horizontal line.

Jon Ossoff
United States Senator