

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 20, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer,

As you begin preparing the next COVID-19 response supplemental package, we urge you to include robust funding and programmatic reforms for the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and its vital grant programs, namely the Economic Adjustment Assistance Program (EAA). This vital program provides a wide range of technical, planning, and public works and infrastructure assistance that will be crucial in rebuilding our economy in a post-coronavirus world.

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. In recent years, we have seen EDA excel in their role to respond to sudden and severe economic dislocations, such as natural disasters. This remains true as the EDA has immediately put to use the funds allocated to the agency from the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act*. With continued recovery efforts necessary for some time to come, the need for sustained funding within the Economic Development Administration is even greater.

We acknowledge that COVID-19 continues to have a negative impact on state and local budgets and that organizations eligible to receive EAA funding are experiencing cuts to staff and services that threaten our economic recovery. Without federal assistance, the organizations charged with leading our nation's economic recovery efforts will no longer have the capacity to carry out their important functions. We ask Congress provide greater access to resources for these organizations as they lead their communities through recovery efforts. To this end, we are seeking changes to the Public Works and Economic Development Act (PWEDA) that will temporarily expand eligibility of uses for EAA funding to include salaries and expenses in times of national emergencies and presidentially declared disasters.

The EDA is essential to promoting economic growth and helping our communities recover from this crisis. We hope that in crafting the next COVID-19 response package you will include robust funding for the EDA with additional flexibility in the use of those funds to support local economic recovery capacity.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Thom Tillis in blue ink, written in a cursive style.

Thom Tillis
United States Senator

Handwritten signature of Kirsten Gillibrand in blue ink, written in a cursive style.

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator