



May 20, 2024

The Honorable Alex Padilla
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Reauthorization of Economic Development Administration (S. 3891)

Dear Senator Padilla:

NATALIE ROGERS
Mayor

MARK STAPP
Vice Mayor

EDDIE ALVAREZ

VICTORIA FLEMING

DIANNA MACDONALD

JEFF OKREPKIE

CHRIS ROGERS

On behalf of the City of Santa Rosa, I am writing to thank you for supporting the *Economic Development Reauthorization Act* and working with the Environment and Public Works Committee to ensure the Economic Development Administration (EDA) has the resources needed to help communities, like Santa Rosa, rebuild after disasters. In 2021, the City of Santa Rosa provided feedback to you regarding the reauthorization of the EDA and submitted recommendations to bolster EDA's role in post-disaster event.

Rebuilding our community required the City of Santa Rosa to use capital and human resources, which would have otherwise been invested in economic development and community infrastructure projects. Like many communities impacted by disasters, Santa Rosa's direct costs were immediate, however, the indirect and opportunity costs are still being felt today. According to a May 2018 St. Louis Federal Reserve report, *The Economic of Natural Disasters*, "Sonoma County had the largest number of claims for direct losses—21,286—for a total loss of nearly \$8 billion. This doesn't count indirect losses, such as the loss of output from the affected wineries or the loss of tourism dollars."

Your work to create the Office of Disaster Recovery and Resilience within the EDA will benefit communities impacted by disasters by supporting long term economic recovery services, including deploying economic development assessment teams, technical assistance and other services. In addition, the bill allows the Secretary to increase the Federal share to 100 percent for a project for economic recovery in response to a major disaster or emergency declared under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act.

As we saw in 2017, the Sonoma Complex fires ravaged us and our surrounding neighbors. At the time, it was the most destructive wildfire California had ever seen. More than 36,000 acres burned, and 7,000 structures were destroyed. Tragically, there were many fatalities across Sonoma County including in the City. Across Sonoma County an estimated 100,000 people were evacuated and the damages were in the billions. This was followed by the 2018 wildfire season, which was the deadliest and most destructive wildfire season on record.



These changes proposed in S. 3891 will provide disaster impacted communities, like Santa Rosa, with the flexibility and assistance needed and to expedite recovery efforts and reduce the indirect and opportunity costs.

With your help and leadership, we have made significant progress towards rebuilding a more resilient community, but the financial and human capital impacts are still being felt today. EDA programs provide critical resources that help communities expand economic opportunities for their residents and businesses. We look forward to working with you to enhance EDA's capabilities to better meet the needs of underserved and disaster impacted communities.

Thank you for your continued leadership on disaster-related policies and ensuring our communities can recovery in a more resilient manner after an incident.

NATALIE ROGERS
Mayor

Sincerely,

MARK STAPP
Vice Mayor

Natalie Rogers, Mayor

EDDIE ALVAREZ
VICTORIA FLEMING
DIANNA MACDONALD
JEFF OKREPKIE
CHRIS ROGERS