



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Deputy Secretary of Commerce
Washington, D.C. 20230

July 7, 2021

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chair, Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Madam Chair:

I am writing to express the Department of Commerce's strong appreciation for the Committee's support of minority-owned businesses, as outlined in S. 1255, the Minority Business Resiliency Act of 2021, which would make permanent and expand the reach of the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) to promote and administer programs to assist the development and resiliency of minority business enterprises (MBEs). We look forward to working with Congress on this important legislation.

MBDA is the only Federal agency dedicated solely to the growth and global competitiveness of the United States' 9.2 million MBEs. MBDA has a strong record of helping firms realize their full economic potential through technical assistance, public and private partnerships, advocacy, research, and education.

MBDA's national network of Minority Business Development Centers helps MBEs gain greater access to capital, contracts, and new markets. Each center provides customized business development services focused on capacity building to bolster growth and sustainability. Over the years, MBDA has consistently met or exceeded its program performance goals. In FY2020, MBDA helped MBEs secure \$6.9 billion in contracts, of which \$3 billion were export transactions, and secure an additional \$1 billion in financing.

The 2022 Budget highlights the Administration's commitment to serving MBEs through bold action that addresses racial inequity and ensures all entrepreneurs have access to resources and opportunities. Overcoming racial inequity requires a sustained all of government approach. The Budget starts the Nation on a path to not only reduce barriers, but also expand opportunities for MBEs. The Budget recognizes the role MBDA will play in advocating for the interests of MBEs and amplifies the bureau's voice by elevating its leadership to the Assistant Secretary level. The Administration also proposes to significantly increase business center funding and MBDA staffing capacity to elevate and address racial inequity across government programs.

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As such, the Department strongly supports the permanent authorization of MBDA and the creation of an Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Minority Business Development. The Department also supports codification of MBDA's existing programs, including minority business development programs in the public and private sectors and the successful minority business center program. We share your desire to advance the goal of growing MBEs and supporting entrepreneurship in every region of the country.

President Biden believes that this is not the time to go back to the way things were; instead, this is the time to reimagine and build a new American economy. We look forward to engaging with Congress to implement the right solutions to rebuild our infrastructure, create millions of good-paying jobs, and position America to compete on a global stage.

The Office of Management and Budget has advised that there is no objection to the transmittal of these views from the standpoint of the Administration's programs.

Sincerely,



Don Graves

cc: The Honorable Roger Wicker, Ranking Member