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United States Senate

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December 22, 2020

Ms. Kerstin Millius
Acting Regional Director
Economic Development Administration
Seattle Regional Office
915 2nd Avenue, Room 1890
Seattle, WA 98174

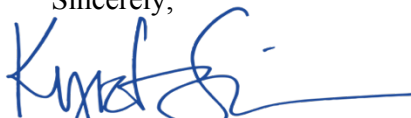
Dear Ms. Millius:

I write regarding the application submitted by the Greater Yuma Economic Development Corporation (GYEDC) to the Economic Development Administration for an Economic Adjustment Assistance Program grant. Financial assistance from this grant would allow GYEDC to support post-secondary education in Yuma and provide students with the skills necessary to qualify for essential workforce jobs that will reduce unemployment and underemployment in western Arizona. More specifically, the grant funding would be used in collaboration with the Yuma Multiversity Campus Corporation (YMVC) to commission a strategic assessment and market analysis of present and future skilled labor needs in Yuma County to modify education programs and foster innovative collaboration with its regional college and partner state universities. GYEDC also hopes to use the funding to establish critical educational outreach programs through the YMVC to connect area unemployed and underemployed citizens with pathways into higher-wage careers.

GYEDC has been integral in developing the YMVC, an educational hub to house multiple Arizona public universities and their various degree programs in one centralized location. Yuma County suffers from high unemployment, low per capita income, and poor education outcomes. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant job loss among low-income earners and exacerbated economic challenges in Yuma. Prior to the pandemic, the Federal Reserve Bank estimated that unemployment in Yuma County was above the national average of 12 percent. Today, the unemployment rate in Yuma County is even higher. Leaders in Yuma County and around western Arizona feel a sense of urgency to develop a strategic plan to assess workforce needs and graduate students ready for the workforce.

GYEDC is well-positioned to collaborate with residents seeking good-paying jobs, institutions of higher education, and employers that offer high-wage, skilled careers. In accordance with all existing agency rules, regulations, and ethical guidelines, I respectfully ask that you give this application full and fair consideration as you make this important decision. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator