



Snowy Mountain Development Corporation

“Building Community and Economic Capital.”

April 9, 2020

Economic Affairs Committee

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Dear Legislators;

We appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback and public comment on the CARES act and implementation within Montana. Snowy Mountain Development Corporation (SMDC) is a Certified Regional Development Corporation (CRDC) and an Economic Development District (EDD) certified by the U.S. and Montana Department of Commerce that serves the six counties in central Montana including Judith Basin, Fergus, Petroleum, Wheatland, Musselshell and Golden Valley for the past 20 years.

Free, timely and professional business technical assistance has been provided by our agency through the CRDC, EDA, and local funding as we have not been successful in securing a funded Small Business Development Center (SBDC) through the Montana Department of Commerce despite our ongoing discussion and efforts.

This has been an unfortunate arrangement for our local businesses who access our various loan and grant programs and use our other resources to help them in accessing other local, state and federal programs. SBDC services were to be provided through two other larger urban centers, which data will demonstrate that these resources are not reaching our businesses. At the same time, the number of queries and request for assistance we have received from our businesses since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic have quadrupled and the number of visits to our website have increased 1500% as we continually provide up-to-date, timely and accurate information through the site.

As we are unable to stretch our current resources to cover this high demand, we are asking that you recommend implementing and funding an SBDC Center hosted by SMDC with the CARES

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SMDC is a 501(c)3 non-profit Economic Development District (EDD) and a Certified Regional Development Corporation (CRDC). SMDC is an equal opportunity provider, and employer. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to USDA Director, Office of Civil Rights, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410. Dial 7-1-1 for Montana Relay.



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act funds. The historic position of the MT Department of Commerce is that they should not create additional centers. While we understand their position, the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates the need to revisit that position as businesses need technical assistance that is readily accessible, available and geographically tenable. Businesses also need the SBDC counselor to direct them to the resources that can meet their immediate needs in a coordinated manner.

Our businesses are in crisis. We continue to receive economic injury worksheets from all six counties. We’ve documented over 200 jobs lost in the region. The CARES act appropriates \$240 million to the SBDC program nation-wide. It is critical that a portion of the Montana SBDC funds provide services in SMDC’s service area rather than stopping at the doors of the larger urban areas.

Thank you for recording this testimony into the public record. We stand ready to assist our businesses and help to stabilize the businesses and local economy. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact me at 535-2591 or bailey@snowymountaindevelopment.com .

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathie A. Bailey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathie A. Bailey,
Executive Director