

**United States Senate**  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1104

July 13, 2018

Ms. Bridget Gonzales  
Chief, Office of Legislative, Education, and Intergovernmental Affairs  
Minority Business Development Agency  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
Herbert Hoover Building, Room 5061  
1401 Constitution Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20230-0001

RE: Synergistic Hawaii Agriculture Council Grant Application (CFDA 11.802)

Dear Ms. Gonzales,

I write in support of the Synergistic Hawaii Agriculture Council's (SHAC) application to the Minority Business Development Agency's (MBDA) 2018 Broad Agency Announcement (CFDA 11.802) for two grants in the amount totaling \$800,000. The purpose of this application is to fund recovery efforts for agriculture industry affected by recent volcanic activity on Hawaii Island.

The recent volcanic activity on Hawaii Island has taken a great toll on agricultural producers. A Presidential Declaration was signed on May 11, 2018, allowing the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other federal agencies to provide disaster assistance to residents, but the impact on Hawaii Island farmers will continue for years to come. SHAC has submitted two grant applications to alleviate this impact.

The first project, "Native Hawaii Infrastructure Focused Public-Private Partnership," would rebuild infrastructure for Puna farmers via an agriculture park, where both papaya and orchid farmers could receive long-term, low cost leases, to restart their businesses.

The second, "Disaster Recovery Project," would establish SHAC as a recovery hub for agriculture stakeholders, largely minority-owned small businesses, to access disaster assistance, business and marketing planning, skills refresher courses and land replacement strategizing. The hub would provide a one-stop shop to help simplify and accelerate access to aide and provide support and guidance during a farmer's rebuilding phase. It will be essential for Hawaii Island's agriculture economy to receive every resource available for farmers willing to rebuild. Hawaii cannot afford to lose this generation of farmers.

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Accordingly, within applicable rules and regulations, I request your full and fair consideration of the SHAC's grant applications. If you need additional information, please contact Norah Wimer in my state office at (808) 522-8970 or [norah\\_wimer@hirono.senate.gov](mailto:norah_wimer@hirono.senate.gov).

Sincerely,



Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator