

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705

March 22, 2016

The Honorable Penny Pritzker  
Secretary  
United States Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Pritzker:

I strongly support the City of Tacoma's application to the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) Business Center Program. In partnership with Bates Technical College, the Tacoma Community Redevelopment Authority, and the World Trade Center of Tacoma, the city seeks to bring technical assistance and business development services to its Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) community.

The MBDA Business Center Program developed by the City of Tacoma leverages significant local public and private resources. The program utilizes strategic partnerships between local agencies and the city's Community and Economic Development Department to offer financial assistance, training, research, mentoring, and counseling services that can create and grow small businesses.

Tacoma would continue to work with partners to promote foreign direct investment and international trade through regional assets such as the Port of Tacoma and World Trade Center of Tacoma. Businesses participating in the MBDA program would be encouraged to take advantage of available services to help them expand globally. The program would further connect businesses to Washington's local and international trade experts, funding assistance programs, and market research tools geared towards making international trade easier for MBE firms.

Support of entrepreneurs, incubators, and small businesses is a priority for the City of Tacoma and its long successful Small Business Enterprise (SBE) program already fosters small business development for minorities and women. The city currently lists over 450 certified Small Business Enterprise firms on its roster and the SBE program has more than doubled its certification of MBE companies over the last two years.

I am encouraged by the excellent work of the City of Tacoma to expand opportunities for its Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) community. I ask for full and fair consideration of their application to the United States Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency Business Center Program.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator

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