

March 12, 2024

The Honorable Tom Carper  
Chair, U.S. Senate Committee on Environment  
and Public Works  
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on  
Environment and Public Works  
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mark Kelly  
Chair, Subcommittee on Transportation  
and Infrastructure  
U.S. Senate Committee on Environment  
and Public Works  
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin Cramer  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on  
Transportation and Infrastructure  
U.S. Senate Committee on Environment  
and Public Works  
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, Subcommittee Chairman Kelly, and Subcommittee Ranking Member Cramer,

On behalf of our national network of regional councils, councils of governments, metropolitan planning organizations, and Economic Development Districts, the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) thanks you for your leadership in introducing the ***Economic Development Reauthorization Act of 2024 (S. 3891)***. NARC and our member organizations write to express our strong support for the reauthorization of the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA). As an organization representing regional organizations across the nation, NARC is committed to fostering economic growth, regional collaboration, and community development.

EDA helps guide the locally based, regionally driven economic development planning process for a national network of more than 400 federally designated regional Economic Development Districts (EDDs). EDA funds investments in high-quality jobs in advanced manufacturing, science and technology, and emerging knowledge-based industries and in vital infrastructure such as water and wastewater systems, middle mile broadband networks, workforce training centers, and much more. These efforts have been instrumental in addressing regional disparities, strengthening infrastructure, and enhancing the overall competitiveness of our communities. If passed, this legislation would have an immensely positive impact for the national network EDDs.

NARC is particularly supportive that the proposed legislation will:

- Reauthorize EDA's core traditional programs, including: Public Works; Partnership Planning; Training, Research, and Technical Assistance; and Economic Adjustment Assistance.
- Provide EDA with the flexibility to increase the federal share for Partnership Planning grants up to 100% for conducting federally mandated planning responsibilities.



**NARC**

*Building Regional Communities*

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- Provide significant increases to annual funding for Partnership Planning grants to EDD. The proposed annual funding level for these grants, beginning at \$90 million in 2025 and increasing to \$130 million by 2029, would allow EDDs to hire and retain more than one full-time staff member with planning expertise.
- Improve EDA's cost sharing requirements across many of its programs by increasing EDA's federal share and reducing local match, making it less burdensome for rural, small, and resource-challenged communities to apply and compete for EDA funding.
- Modernize EDA's authorities to award grants to public-private partnerships or consortia for high-speed broadband projects.
- Establish the Office of Disaster Recovery and Resilience within EDA.
- Authorize more than \$3 billion in funding for EDA's programs over a five-year period from fiscal years 2025 through 2029.

This proposed reauthorization holds tremendous promise for regional organizations, particularly those designated as EDDs. The EDA's proven track record and ability to adapt to evolving economic landscapes make it an essential partner in our collective efforts to build stronger, more resilient communities. Reauthorization of the EDA would empower regional organizations with increased funding, flexibility, and resources, enabling them to play a more effective role in driving economic development, fostering resilience, and creating positive impacts in their regions and communities.

NARC and our membership organizations are immensely grateful for your leadership in introducing this legislation. As this bill moves forward, NARC stands ready to support this effort.

Sincerely,

Erich Zimmermann  
Executive Director