

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 11, 2020

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
House Committee on Appropriations
H-307, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Simpson
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
House Committee on Appropriations
H-307, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander, Ranking Member Feinstein, Chairwoman Kaptur and Ranking Member Simpson,

We are writing to thank you for your support for the Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC). Investments from the NBRC have a demonstrated record of success; this funding has significantly improved the infrastructure and quality of life in rural parts of our states, spurring job creation, economic growth and community development.

As Congress looks towards a stop gap measure to fund the government, we request your committees continue to provide much needed investment in the NBRC's important work. We appreciate House appropriators allocating \$25 million for the NBRC in H.R. 7613, the Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, and would ask that the Commission be funded at a level consistent with or greater than that figure in any stop gap package.

We are also grateful for the inclusion of the following language in the committee report (H. Rept. 116-449) corresponding to the aforementioned legislation:

“Language has been included under General Provisions, section 606, waiving requirements relating to non-Federal cost-share grants and cooperative agreements for the Delta Regional Authority, the Northern Border Regional Commission, and the Denali Commission.”

In incorporating this language, the Committee has recognized that it is imperative to temporarily lift the requirement that applicants to the NBRC provide twenty percent matching funds in order to be considered. In light of the significant economic ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is no longer a reasonable expectation for grant recipients to raise significant capital, especially as traditional sources like municipalities and foundations are strained financially. We therefore encourage you to also include this report language in any upcoming stop gap package.

As you know, the Commission has repeatedly received overwhelming bipartisan support in Congress through robust appropriations and reauthorization of the program. Through the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-334), Congress extended the authorization of the NBRC for an additional five years, increased the appropriations authorization for the program, expanded its reach to additional counties throughout the region and established the State Capacity Building Grant Program, a new program to help develop projects that support business retention and expansion, access to high-speed broadband, critical infrastructure development and job creation throughout the region. Moreover, in the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (P.L. 116-94), Congress included \$25 million for the NBRC, including \$750,000 for the State Capacity Building Grant Program.

While the Commission has made great progress promoting economic development and job growth in our communities, continued federal investment in the NBRC is critical to sustaining its efforts. The NBRC is a strategic use of taxpayer dollars and leverages significant private capital for projects in our states. It is clear that we need to be encouraging economic and community development, and we commend the work of the subcommittees for their previous support to this vital program.

We appreciate your consideration of this important request for funding and the above report language and look forward to working together to ensure the NBRC's continued success.

Sincerely,



Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress



Elise M. Stefanik
Member of Congress



Chris Pappas
Member of Congress



Peter Welch
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress