



June 6, 2016

Senator Karen Spilka

Chairwoman, Senate Ways & Means Committee

Representative Brian Dempsey

Chairman, House Ways & Means Committee

State House

Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairwoman Spilka and Chairman Dempsey:

On behalf of our members and the hundreds of small businesses they serve, I am writing to urge the 2017 Budget Conference Committee to adopt the House provision that includes \$2 million for the Small Business Technical Assistance program (line item 7002-0040) and the Senate provision that provides \$100,000 to the Massachusetts Food Trust (line item 7007-0300, MA Office of Business Development).

The SBTA program has served thousands of small businesses since it was first established in FY 2007. In fiscal year 2015, the program achieved the following:

- * Grants to 39 non-profit organizations across the state (including SMOC), ranging from \$10,000 to \$125,000, and Mini-Grants for Professional Services to 67 small businesses to help them in such areas as accounting, legal services, marketing, and technology.
- * Technical assistance and training from grantee small business assistance providers to 1,486 business clients.
- * 701 new jobs were created and 1,473 jobs were preserved, at a cost of less than \$1,000 per job.
- * 331 businesses received financing for a total of \$32,503,124, a leverage ratio of \$16 per \$1 of state funding and a 98% increase over FY 2014.

The program is clearly working as intended and demand for the funding continues to grow. Therefore, we respectfully request that the Conference Committee maintain level program funding of \$2 million.



In addition to the SBTA program, MACDC supports programs that help expand economic opportunity to families and communities across the Commonwealth. We encourage the Conference Committee to support the Senate approved amendment to provide \$100,000 for the Massachusetts Food Trust Program. These funds may be used to augment \$1.1 million in capital funds allocated by Governor Baker to launch a new MA Food Venture program. MACDC is eager to work with the MA Public Health Association, the Administration and the Legislature to refine and develop this new initiative. Our members recognize the fundamental, interrelated interests that impact low- and moderate-income families in rural areas, small cities and urban neighborhoods. We see the dedicated funding proposed for the SBTA and MA Food Trust programs to be a fair, equitable investment in the Commonwealth's citizens and these communities.

On behalf of the MACDC Board of Directors and Membership, I want to thank you for your strong commitment to many shared community development priorities, in particular, your high-level support for MRVP, Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT), and many other housing and community development investments. We are grateful to all the representatives and senators from across the Commonwealth that have expressed strong support for these programs, and we respectfully request that the Conference Committee approve funding these important economic development initiatives.

Sincerely,

Joseph Kriesberg

President & CEO

Cc: Hon. Steve Kulik

Hon. Sal DiDomenico

Hon. Vinny deMacedo

Hon. Todd Smola