March XX, 2015

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
142 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC  20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC  20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Mikulski:

As you begin work preparing the fiscal year FY2016 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, we urge you to include in the bill funding for the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) at the President’s recommended FY2016 level of $273 million, a $23 million increase over the FY2015 enacted level.

Since 1965, EDA has worked directly with local and regional stakeholders to address the economic needs of communities across the country. EDA is unique among federal programs in that it is focused solely on private sector job creation and economic growth in distressed areas. With a modest budget, EDA has developed a record of making strategic investments and building community and regional partnerships to expand business in areas such as advanced manufacturing, science, health care, and technology.

EDA partners with the nationwide network of Economic Development Districts and state and local officials to address the fundamental building blocks necessary for economic growth: infrastructure upgrades, business development loans and financing, energy efficiency investments, regional innovation strategies, and public-private partnerships. EDA is well-positioned to assist communities as they respond to sudden and severe economic dislocations such as plant closures or major natural disasters.

The President’s FY2016 budget request for EDA represents an increase for Economic Development Assistance Programs, the core programs that provide direct assistance to communities for planning, public works and infrastructure improvements, and economic assistance to address sudden and dramatic changes to regional economies. These core programs provide the foundation for EDA investments to foster economic growth in communities across the country and we support increased funding for them.

We hope that in crafting your FY2016 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act you will give consideration to funding EDA at the President’s requested level of $273 million.

Sincerely,