

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1804

June 24, 2014

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack  
Secretary of Agriculture  
US Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

I am writing on behalf of Coastal Communities Consulting, Inc. (CCC) which has submitted a proposal to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for funding under the 200K Small Socially Disadvantaged Producer Grant (SSDPG) program. It is my pleasure to strongly support CCC's efforts to provide technical assistance to small, socially-disadvantaged agricultural producers in Louisiana.

CCC is unique in that it is the only non-profit organization solely focused on the technical assistance, social service, and economic development needs of our rural communities along coastal southeast Louisiana. CCC is committed to providing capacity to non-English speakers as well as native English speaking business owners who lack formal education and are unfamiliar with government processes, grant application requirements or resources available for their business and personal use.

In rural Louisiana, one niche group of people that has been underserved over the years is the commercial fishermen and their families. Their businesses and harvested seafood products are vital to Louisiana's economy and is a driving force behind the State's success in its tourism industry. However, the same industry has been especially hit hard in the past decade due to unforeseen occurrences like Hurricane Katrina. One of the largest barriers for these families and businesses is a lack of capacity to navigate formal systems in order to access government resources. CCC provides this capacity with technical assistance, family support services, and economic development in rural communities. In just three years, CCC has helped over 1,000 of Louisiana's coastal families sustain and grow their businesses during recovery efforts following unexpected disasters.

I believe you will find CCC's application to be exemplary in every way, and I would appreciate every appropriate consideration be given to the application, within the applicable guidelines, during the review. I respectfully request any additional information you can provide on this matter and look forward to hearing from you about the final decision.

Thanking you in advance for your careful review and with kindest regards, I am

Sincerely,



Mary L. Landrieu  
United States Senator

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