

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Amendment makes Minority Business Development Agency permanent

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Contact: press@baldwin.senate.gov

202-224-6225

Baldwin Amendment Makes Minority Business Development Agency Permanent

The bipartisan amendment will be included in the Senate Infrastructure Bill

Washington, D.C. – An amendment by Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Roger Wicker (R-MS), and Ben Cardin (D-MD), which would make the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) permanent, was unanimously accepted into the bipartisan infrastructure deal. The amendment, which passed on a bipartisan basis, also expands the agency’s capacity to promote and administer programs to assist the development and resiliency of minority business enterprises (MBEs). Unlike the Small Business Administration, the MBDA has no business size restrictions.

“The Minority Business Development Agency is a crucial resource for minority

owned business and businesses in underserved communities,” **said Senator Baldwin.** “Especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the resources provided by the MBDA will help hundreds of entrepreneurs and minority businesses achieve their goals and build back better. I am glad to see our bipartisan amendment make this agency permanent, and look forward to seeing businesses in Wisconsin and nationwide take advantage of the support and assistance they offer”

“The African American Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin proudly supports the Minority Business Development Act of 2021 and recognizes Senator Baldwin’s leadership on this issue,” **said Ossie C. Kendrix Jr., President and CEO of the African American Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin.** “This legislation would make permanent the Minority Business Development Agency at the Department of Commerce, ensuring intentional support for the sole-agency tasked with assisting in the development of minority-owned enterprises. As Black Business owners begin to build back our economy in the post-pandemic world, we will need deliberate legislative actions that will assist in the creation and growth of economic opportunities in our community.”

“We thank Senator Baldwin and her colleagues for leading efforts to provide critical investment to underserved communities for years to come,” **said Nelson Soler, President and CEO of the Latino Chamber of Commerce of Southeast Wisconsin.** “The Latino Chamber of Commerce of Southeast Wisconsin believes the efforts to codify and modernize the MBDA will ensure minority business owners have the support they need to grow their business and impact within their local communities.”

“The Wisconsin Indian Business Alliance and the Wisconsin Native Loan Fund applaud Senator Baldwin for championing the Minority Business Development Act of 2021,” **said Fern Orié, CEO of the Wisconsin Native Loan Fund and Chairwoman of the Wisconsin Indian Business Alliance.** “Minority owned businesses are often the most overlooked, but this legislation will give our businesses the support they need through the Department of Commerce’s Minority Business Development Agency. By providing our minority owned businesses with avenues to capital, technical assistance support, and to expand through, this legislation will help our economy continue to recover in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Specifically the amendment:

- provides certainty by placing the MBDA in statute and formally establishing processes for its largest program, the MBDA Business Center Program;
- makes the MBDA more effective by putting into law the mission and goals of the agency and giving it the proper tools to carry them out successfully;
- builds a diverse pipeline of entrepreneurial talent by creating a new program to spur entrepreneurship at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and minority serving institutions (MSIs);
- expands the geographic reach of the MBDA by authorizing the creation of regional MBDA offices and rural business centers to be administered through HBCUs;
- provides financial assistance to carry out private sector development, public sector development, and research in the form of contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements;
- provides grants to community and national nonprofits that support MBEs;
- creates an advisory council to consult federal agencies on supporting MBEs and coordinate federal MBE programs;
- creates a presidentially appointed and Senate-confirmed Under Secretary of Commerce for Minority Business Development to lead the agency; and
- mandates additional reporting.

The legislation is supported by the National Urban League, Page 30 Coalition (including, U.S. Black Chambers, U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and National ACE), Prosperity Now, LISC, Small Business Majority, the Hmong Wisconsin Chamber of Commerce, and the African American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Racine.