

KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND

NEW YORK  
SENATOR

RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING  
SUITE 478  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205  
202-224-4451

COMMITTEES:  
ARMED SERVICES  
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS  
AGRICULTURE  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

May 14, 2013

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack  
Secretary of Agriculture  
United States Department of Agriculture  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

I write in support of the application submitted by the Sullivan County Industrial Development Agency (IDA) for funding from the Rural Business Enterprise Grants and Rural Business Opportunity Grants through the United States Department of Agriculture. The requested funding will assist in the development of a food aggregation and distribution facility within the Sullivan-Wawarsing Rural Economic Area Partnership (REAP) Zone.

The Sullivan-Wawarsing REAP Zone is one of five special economic development zones nationally that aim to stimulate the local economy and community development in the United States. Farming and related industry is a vital part of Sullivan County's economy. In recent years, the demand from the New York Metropolitan Area for locally raised produce and meats, as well as processed goods, has helped to expand small farming operations in the County, which now account for more than \$68.7million in economic activity each year. Sullivan County is currently in the process of developing a red meat processing plant in Liberty, NY and a dairy processing facility to support these farming operations.

The requested funding will support the Sullivan County Industrial Development Agency in launching a satellite Food Distribution Hub Project that will enable farmers and food producers in the Sullivan-Wawarsing REAP Zone to efficiently access thriving local and regional markets. The IDA will develop a centrally located aggregation and distribution facility to meet demand for LTL (less than trailer load) freight service, enabling transactions between farmers and wholesale buyers within the county while also opening up local producers to the larger Hudson Valley and New York City markets. Several other smaller scale projects in the area will also benefit from this project including the distilleries, wineries and breweries, as well as the farmers and agri-businesses that are producing locally grown and processed value-added products, all of which will present new opportunities to grow the rural economy of this region.

I ask that you please give this application your full consideration. If you have any questions, or desire further information, please do not hesitate to contact my staff member Andrew Usyk at (202) 224-4451..

Sincerely,



Kirsten E. Gillibrand  
United States Senator