

United States Senate

July 25, 2017

The Honorable Linda McMahon, Administrator
Small Business Administration
409 Third Street, SW, Suite 7900
Washington, DC 20416

Dear Administrator McMahon:

I write today to call attention to the devastating drought and wildfire disasters taking place in Montana and the hardships it places on small business. Numerous Montana counties are suffering from dire drought conditions and now hundreds of thousands of acres are actively burning as wildfire grips the region. These disasters are creating significant challenges for Montana's small businesses in our rural communities. Small businesses, such as diners and gas stations, often rely on the economic activity created by production agriculture, Montana's top industry. When agriculture disasters strike, it harms all of the businesses that support our small farming and ranching communities. The Small Business Administration's (SBA) Disaster Loan Assistance program is a vital tool for small businesses to survive disaster relate downturns. That's why it is critically important for SBA to cut red tape to ensure the program runs effectively without being overly burdensome for applicants.

Rural small businesses are very efficient. They hire employees with wide-ranging skills to tackle all jobs and to serve their customers well. In times of crisis, however, these businesses cannot afford to have their employees waste time on cumbersome application processes. I am hearing some reports on the ground in Montana that it can be overly difficult to qualify for a disaster loan. I am concerned that SBA's useful programs will fail to address the needs of disaster stricken rural communities if small businesses don't have the necessary resources to get through an unnecessarily demanding application process.

In the coming days, I ask that the SBA prioritize assisting Montana's Small Businesses and cutting red tape on the application process. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jon Tester