

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 20, 2016

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

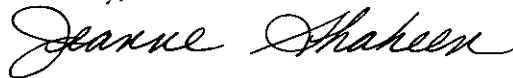
I am writing to express my strong support for the Women's Rural Entrepreneurial Network (WREN) in its application for \$30,000 from USDA Rural Development's Rural Business Development Grant to implement its Next Step Business Project.

For over twenty years WREN has provided valuable technical assistance and entrepreneurial support for nearly fifteen hundred businesses in the rural and economically disadvantaged communities of northern New Hampshire. The struggle of many of WREN's members to operate their small businesses often impedes them from creating more jobs and attaining sustainable livelihoods.

With assistance from the Rural Business Development Grant, WREN's Next Step Business Project will identify twelve businesses that have the potential for growth and provide them with targeted technical assistance. This grant will utilize the expertise of WREN staff combined with that of outside consultants to help these twelve businesses achieve greater marketing success and operational efficiencies – all with the aim of improving the business owner's income, creating incremental job growth and a more resilient economy.

I strongly support WREN's application for the Rural Business Development Grant and would appreciate your careful consideration of their proposal. If you have any questions please contact Emily Cashman from my staff at (603) 647-7500.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator