

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 12, 2016

Jay Williams
U.S. Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development
U.S. Economic Development Administration
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW, Suite 71014
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Assistant Secretary Williams:

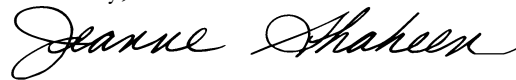
I write today in strong support of the application from the Winchester Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) for a \$700,000 grant through the Economic Development Agency (EDA)'s 'Economic Development Assistance Program.' The WEDC will put these funds – along with matching state and local funds – to good use in developing Stone Mountain Business Park, a venture that is expected to generate over 400 new jobs in a region with a higher-than-average state unemployment rate.

With the closing of Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Plant in 2014, residents of Winchester permanently lost a long-time source of steady employment. This compelled the WEDC to explore ways it could revitalize the economy of a town that already faced low population growth, high property taxes and static wages. Winchester cannot afford to lose its base of high-skilled and professional workers. Using a feasibility study funded by a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant, the WEDC concluded that the best way to retain these residents – and perhaps draw even more to the scenic New England town – is to build a new business park on a site that is well-suited to hold a collection of new companies.

Stone Mountain Business Park complies with the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, which the WEDC was an active participant in crafting. It will satisfy Winchester's most pressing need: infrastructure improvements and redevelopment. These improvements will catalyze job growth and retention in the retail, tourism and the industrial sectors of the local economy. Alongside funding from the EDA, the WEDC plans to leverage a considerable amount of private investment from lenders and businesses who see Winchester as a community poised for future growth.

I strongly support the WEDC in its application for funding from EDA and urge your serious consideration of its proposal. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Jon Jarvis from my staff at (603) 647-7500.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator