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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6350

April 11, 2000

The Honorable Albert Wynn  
U.S. House of Representatives  
407 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Wynn:

Thank you very much for your letter concerning the Small Business Reauthorization bill. I appreciate your taking the time to contact me and to give me the opportunity to clarify my position on this matter.

The Small Business Reauthorization bill contains a provision adopted without objection by the Senate Small Business Committee, to clarify the responsibilities imposed by statute on contracting officers in carrying out both the 8(a) and HUBZone programs. Each of those programs has a unique role, and both are vital. The 8(a) program helps minority-owned businesses to develop and grow, while the HUBZone program helps develop the most distressed areas in our nation's inner cities, poor rural counties, and Indian reservations. Both of those objectives are essential to help minority communities share in our nation's current prosperity.

To protect the 8(a) program and to allow the HUBZone program to grow and reach its full potential, this Committee and the full Congress passed legislation three years ago granting contracting officers the discretion to decide whether a prospective contract would be awarded through the 8(a) program or the HUBZone program. Contracting officers, who are responsible for carrying out the contracting goals in the Small Business Act, would be able to track their accomplishment of both the Small Disadvantaged Business goal and the HUBZone goal as the year progresses and would be able to devote contracts to whichever program needs additional resources to meet its goal. This gives the contracting officer the flexibility to carry out both programs, and ensures that both the 8(a) and HUBZone programs succeed. The language we adopted in our reauthorization bill merely restates that contracting officers continue to have this flexibility.

This approach simply reconfirms what the Senate Small Business Committee proposed in the legislation adopted three years ago. The potential impact of the HUBZone program on the 8(a) program was a central issue at that time. The legislation reported from this Committee therefore sought to protect the 8(a) program from harm, and it did so in a particular manner: it placed the HUBZone and 8(a) programs on a parallel track with neither taking precedence over

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the other. As my colleague and Ranking Democratic Member John Kerry stated at the time of our markup (remarks that appear on page 32 of the markup transcript), the revised HUBZone legislation established "parity" between the HUBZone and 8(a) programs. The revisions to implement this approach were adopted by our Committee, approved by both the Senate and the House, and signed into law. In my view, this makes the agreement we reached on this topic binding on all the parties that signed onto it.

At this time, I am aware of no evidence of harm to the 8(a) program. Since I do not want that result, I would very much appreciate receiving specific information that indicates such harm is occurring. As the HUBZone program is implemented more fully, I assure you that this Committee will monitor its usage, as well as any and all deleterious effects on the 8(a) program.

Please feel free to contact me again if you need more information. I hope this clarifies my views on this issue and addresses your concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Bond", written in a cursive style.

Christopher S. Bond  
Chairman

cc: Congressional Black Caucus letter co-signers  
The Honorable James Talent

The forgoing letter was sent to the following Representatives:

The Honorable Jim Talent  
Chairman, Committee on Small Business  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2361 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable James E. Clyburn  
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319 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Sheila Jackson Lee  
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410 Cannon House Office Building  
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The Honorable Carrie Meek  
U.S. House of Representatives  
401 Cannon House Office Building  
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The Honorable Jesse Jackson, Jr.  
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The Honorable William Jefferson  
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The Honorable Melvin Watt  
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The Honorable Chaka Fattah  
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The Honorable Earl Hilliard  
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The Honorable Julia Carson  
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The Honorable Danny Davis  
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The Honorable Major Owens  
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The Honorable Charles Rangel  
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The Honorable Barbara Lee  
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The Honorable Juanita Millender-McDonald  
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The Honorable Carolyn Kilpatrick  
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The Honorable Cynthia McKinney  
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The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson  
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The Honorable Gregory Meeks  
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The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton  
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The Honorable John Lewis  
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The Honorable John Conyers, Jr.  
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The Honorable Bobby Scott  
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