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Dear Ms. Johnson:

The news of elimination of CDBG funding for the Maine Downtown Center and the Downtown Revitalization grants has alarmed and saddened me. As a resident and as City Manager of Eastport, I can testify as to the effectiveness and importance to both functions.

The Maine Downtown Center 's "Four Point Approach" has been a guiding principle in the revitalization of Eastport's historic downtown and community at large. The Healthy Maine Streets program has been instrumental in the repair to Eastport's tennis courts, the installation of bicycle racks, and future plans to expand Eastport's walking and bicycle paths. Eastport has dedicated time, energy, and funds to its evolving streetscapes including multiple perennial gardens, sculptures, walking paths, interpretive signage, and waterfront walking path. Eastport is anticipating its Community Building Project which is tentatively scheduled for December and we proudly display our expansion into the natural and built environment with our waterfront granite amphitheater which is used for live music and family movie nights.

I can state sincerely, that without CDBG Downtown Revitalization grants, I do not believe Eastport's downtown would have been revitalized to the extent one sees today. Eastport was formerly known by Tim Sample's tongue-in-cheek, "the festival of boarded up store fronts." Today, those boarded up store fronts are historically restored and almost fully occupied with businesses and renters living above the storefronts. CDBG Downtown Revitalization grants are crucial to small and rural communities, especially those in areas where economic development is so desperately needed.

In Washington County, Eastport is no longer known as the city with the boarded downtown; it is now a model for towns like Machias, Lubec, and Houlton, which are looking to experience the same rebirth in restoration and economic development.

Please reconsider the elimination of this vital program. If there is any proof to its effect, Eastport is it.

Sincerely,

Elaine Abbott
City Manager