



November 10, 2015

Ms. Deborah Johnson
Maine Department of Economic
& Community Development
59 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Ms. Johnson:

I write today in response to the Program Statement for the 2016 Community Development Block Grant program. Specifically, I write to voice our support of the work being done by the Maine Downtown Center, which has direct impact in our region through two avenues – Rockland Main Street, Inc. and the Camden Downtown Network Board – and to express our deep concern for the funding loss to the Maine Downtown Center.

Both of these local entities have led significant initiatives to invigorate the economies in their respective downtown districts. The downtown areas in Camden and Rockland are active, vibrant, year-round commerce centers for our region, and the support of the Maine Downtown Center to our two local downtown organizations has been a critical element of their continued growth and success. There is no question that Rockland Main Street, Inc. and the Camden Downtown Network Board have measurable positive impacts on our downtowns through orchestrated efforts to attract and retain business, facilitating communication between downtown businesses, acting as liaison and advocate for downtown businesses with municipal officials, and coordinating promotion of their respective downtown areas throughout our region and beyond. These entities are a vital complement to the work of our regional Chamber of Commerce that covers over a dozen communities from Lincolnville to St George.

We encourage you to re-visit your decision in future budget cycles, and restore funding to this vital economic development program which breathes life into downtown districts all across our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas G Peaco", written in a cursive style.

Thomas G Peaco
Executive Director