

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4704

COMMITTEES:
APPROPRIATIONS
BUDGET
HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

November 25th, 2024

The Honorable Michael S. Regan
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Administrator Regan,

I am writing in support of the application submitted by the Okanogan County Community Action Council and their statutory partner the Office of Rural and Farmworker Housing to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's *Environmental and Climate Justice Community Change Grant Program* for funding to support two Microgrid Community Resiliency hubs.

These projects will help safeguard disadvantaged populations in rural Eastern Washington from the impacts of climate and pollution risks while expanding climate resiliency services and education. The first project, *The Center*, will be in the health care district in Omak, Washington, and will provide the Omak community with a climate-resiliency demonstration project and "one-stop-shop" that addresses the needs of the community's most vulnerable residents. The Center's sustainable design will include solar panels, batteries, natural lighting, ventilation for temperature control, and air/odor filtration. It will serve as a disaster relief center during extreme heat, wildfire, and flooding events. The second project, *The Food Hub*, will house Okanogan County's food bank and distribution center, which supports nine food pantries across the county. The food bank provides food assistance to 11,000 county residents annually. The project will feature solar panels, batteries, and ventilation for temperature control. It will also include a new market-style pantry for the Okanogan Food Pantry, which will reduce food waste and improve the experience of 300 clients that use the pantry weekly.

According to the EPA IRA Disadvantaged Communities Map, more than two-thirds of Okanogan County communities are disadvantaged; Okanogan and Omak are 100% disadvantaged. The resilience hubs and the programs running out of these facilities will help the community become more resilient, supporting workforce development and safeguarding food security in a food desert community. Both projects under this proposal bring equity and social justice to a disadvantaged community and make an investment that will benefit the most vulnerable of Okanogan County residents now and into the future. Thank you for your fair and full consideration of the Okanogan County Community Action Council and Office of Rural and Farmworker Housing's application. Please contact Emma Abraham in my Seattle office at 206-553-0724 with any questions.

Sincerely,



Patty Murray
United States Senator