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April 30, 2021

Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro  
H-307 The Capitol  
First St SE  
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Kay Granger  
1036 Longworth House Office Building  
1 Independence Ave SE  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair DeLauro and Ranking Member Granger,

I am requesting funding for the Mt. Growmore Hydroponic Farming Greenhouse and Wellness Campus in Fiscal Year 2022. This request is for the Economic Development Initiative account under the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The entity to receive funding for the project is the East End NRZ Market & Cafe Inc., located at 1851 Stratford Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06607.

The East End NRZ Market & Cafe, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is seeking \$1 million for construction of the Mt. Growmore Hydroponic Farm and Wellness Campus. Funds will be used for construction costs, personnel salaries, payments for services, labor costs, related equipment purchases, and additional costs to assist in the development of the campus. The requested funds will support up to 8 additional containers for gardening, community learning, mental health and trauma-informed training, and workforce development.

This investment will result in both economic and equity benefits in Bridgeport, supporting the community, the neighborhood, and the local economy. This project will help provide local, healthy, fresh food in a community that's widely been recognized as a severe food desert through the creation of a hydroponic farm. The campus will also serve as a focal point for services to the community, providing workforce and entrepreneurial training in a city of consistently high poverty. All of this will take place on a developed parcel formerly named Mt. Trashmore after the 35-foot high pile of illegally dumped construction debris that occupied the property.

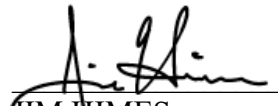
This project is an appropriate use of taxpayer funds because it directly addresses the needs of women and families in the East End of Bridgeport, CT, a community already bearing the heavy burdens of pollution, disease, poverty and crime, and disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Designed by those with lived experience, Mt. Growmore builds individual and community resiliency, simultaneously contributing to social and economic mobility while developing food sovereignty and addressing physical and mental health. Through phased construction to advance indoor urban agriculture and delivery of community-designed services, including maternal mental health, trauma recovery, civic engagement, and women's clean energy business incubation, the Mt. Growmore Hydroponic Farming Greenhouse and Wellness Campus sets a course for community resiliency and recovery.

The project is supported by several local and statewide partners, including the Yale School of Medicine's Elevate policy lab, which aims to alleviate poverty and improve the mental health of children and parents; the University of Connecticut's College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources; the Bridgeport Economic Development Corporation; the Bridgeport Landing Development; the Bridgeport Regional

Business Council; The Bridgeport City Council; Bridgeport Mayor Joe Ganim, and State Representative Andre Baker (124th District) and State Senator Denis Bradley (23rd District), both of whom represent the Bridgeport area in the Connecticut General Assembly.

Ultimately, the Mt. Growmore Campus furthers partners' mission by using a creative approach to grow and distribute fresh produce in a low-income community starving for high-quality, nutritious foods. It provides workforce development opportunities by creating jobs and designing targeted training opportunities for residents, and creates entrepreneurial opportunities for local job creation and business ownership in the food production sector.

Sincerely,



JIM HIMES  
Member of Congress