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August 21, 2023

The Honorable Isabella Casillas Guzman
Administrator
U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)
409 3rd St, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20416

Dear Administrator Guzman:

I write to urge SBA to quickly approve any request from the State of Rhode Island to provide disaster assistance for small businesses affected by a large fire that occurred on Block Island this weekend.

On Friday night, a major fire erupted in the center of New Shoreham, Rhode Island, on Block Island. Local fire departments responded promptly and contained the blaze, but multiple small businesses in the center of town were destroyed or damaged, parts of the island temporarily lost power, and residents and businesses were directed to limit water usage during and after the fire.

While the full extent of damages is still unclear, a number of small businesses are unlikely to rapidly reopen. As an extremely popular summer destination for families throughout the northeast, Block Island and its small businesses rely on August for a significant portion of annual economic activity and revenue. Local institutions that cannot quickly reopen will lose critically important income in the weeks and months ahead.

No small business should be forced to close due to extreme circumstances beyond their control. Once SBA receives a state disaster declaration, I urge you to provide prompt, robust disaster assistance resources to eligible small businesses. I stand ready to help you and your staff communicate available resources and options to these businesses.

Thank you for SBA's constant work boosting local businesses and our broader economy. I look forward to your prompt reply to this letter and your help ensuring affected businesses receive the support they deserve.

Sincerely,



Jack Reed
U.S. Senator