



U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20416

OFFICE OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

October 23, 2009

The Honorable Olympia J. Snowe
Ranking Member
Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Snowe:

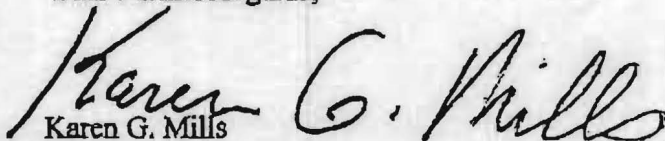
Thank you for your letter dated October 19, 2009 concerning the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA's) implementation of the Women-Owned Small Business ("WOSB") Program. We at the SBA share your concern that Congress authorized a contracting program for WOSBs in 2000 as part of the SBA Reauthorization Act (Public Law 106-554) and not enough was done to implement this necessary program in the intervening years. As a result, I have made implementation of the WOSB Program one of my highest priorities. Much work has already been done to make the program a working reality as noted below.

The SBA is taking critical steps to promulgate the implementing regulations for the WOSB Program. SBA has drafted a revised Proposed Rule, working closely with the Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel and Division of Civil Rights and also with the Office of Management and Budget ("OMB"). On October 20, 2009, after undergoing extensive internal review under the Agency's clearance procedures, SBA transmitted the Proposed Rule to the OMB's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs for inter-agency review pursuant to Executive Order 12866.

The nature of the regulatory process does not allow me to give you a precise timetable for final publication and implementation of the WOSB contracting regulations. The interagency review process ordinarily takes approximately 90 days, after which agency comments will be addressed by SBA. The public comment period follows immediately thereafter. I can assure you that SBA is committed to finalizing the Rule as soon as possible, and that it will read and respond to all interagency and public comments as promptly as can be done consistent with a full and proper review. I am firmly committed to taking the necessary actions to comply with the law implementing the WOSB Program and I share your vision to achieve successful implementation of a meaningful and effective program that will increase Federal procurement opportunities for WOSBs.

Thank you for your interest and strong leadership with respect to this program. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me directly.

With warmest regards,


Karen G. Mills