

To Honorable Kathleen Taylor And The Honorable Jeff Reardon.

Dear Co-Chair Taylor, Co-Chair Reardon and the Members of the Subcommittee

My name is Patrick Prince, a business owner, with experience in high-level athletics, banking, and consumer packaging. I write to you to give you my honest opinion and reflection on being a business owner that also happens to be a minority and a human. The level of support that ODA Marketing team that I have received from the small business team with the Department of Agriculture is by far the most helpful, useful, and resourceful group of individuals that I have come across in my 12 years as a professional. The effort And the ability to listen to where we are and how they can help during this difficult time in the pandemic and trying to run a business. They ask the right questions they listen to when we speak! and they respond with positive actions and reinforcement. Why is this so important? Minority businesses are on the verge of Extinction, a divide that has worsened in the last 12 months when we account for less than 1% of national funds in either grants or funded awards. Regardless of what the government said the sides or government contracts! I write to you today to make you aware of the change ODA Marketing team and the department of agriculture are trying to change. Please listen to them because they know where we are as a community because they listen! I believe heroes don't always wear capes but they can sit behind a desk! The department of agriculture is the absolute best to help push us forward. they're trying day and night to improve the process and understand where they can make improvements for all. There have been a lot of minority groups, State agencies that I belong to. If it wasn't for the connections and relationship-building activities around financial, business planning I would have a lot less. While facing extreme circumstances that affect fundraising access to capital, health and safety protocols, grants, and PPP type of funding that I have applied for and have received zero education or zero funds towards my ideas. I was starting to doubt if what I was doing was right. I met Erick, and he was able to listen, adjust and give his best. That's all I could ever ask for! because of that, we are getting better! again I write this to you to understand and consider what they are trying to do and if and when they receive what they're asking for, it will make a generational impact!

Patrick Prince