

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 4, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell:

We write to you regarding the Restaurant Revitalization Fund (RRF), which was established by the American Rescue Plan to provide critical relief to restaurants, bars, and other small businesses in the food and beverage services sector. In light of the extraordinary demand for the program, we urge you to replenish the Fund to meet the current need among eligible applicants.

The food and beverage industries have been among the hardest-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, with restaurant and food service sales down \$280 billion from expected levels and restaurant jobs down 1.7 million from pre-pandemic levels. Even as restrictions are being lifted and the economy slowly rebounds, restaurants are only just beginning to recover from the devastating economic impact of the pandemic. In Virginia and across the country, restaurants continue to experience decreased sales, crippling staffing shortages, and significant debt burdens. Hundreds of Virginia restaurant owners have told us that they may have to close their doors permanently if they do not receive additional federal relief.

The \$28.6 billion RRF has already started working to keep tens of thousands of these establishments across the nation open. However, demand has far outstripped the available funding. On July 2, 2021, Small Business Administration (SBA) Administrator Isabel Guzman announced the closure of the RRF program. SBA reported that they had received more than 278,000 eligible applications requesting a total of \$72.2 billion in funding. As of June 30, 2021, approximately 101,000 of those applications had been approved.

We urge you to bring up legislation that provides the RRF with additional funding to meet the outstanding demand for the program. Virginia's restaurants play a major role in the Commonwealth's economy, employing over 300,000 people prior to the pandemic. Ensuring that restaurants and similar small businesses in Virginia and across the country have the resources they need to stay solvent will facilitate a speedy economic recovery.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Mark R Warner

Mark R. Warner
United States Senator

Tim Kaine

Tim Kaine
United States Senator