**Date**

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
fax: 202-228-3954

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
fax: 202-224-0454

Dear Senator Feinstein/Boxer:

I am writing on behalf of **California Association of Microenterprise Organizations** (CAMEO)to thank you for your continuing support of the Micro sector and to request that you continue your support.

I request that you prioritize programs that assist new entrepreneurs and micro-businesses in the Fiscal Year 2013 programmatic request letters you submit to the Appropriations Committee. Programs that enable entrepreneurs to invest in their small businesses by providing business assistance or low-cost financing boost job creation and economic growth. They deserve your support and need your help to continue! We ask that you support funding for the following programs:

Financial Services and General Government

* **The Microloan Program**: $25 million for loans and $20 million for technical assistance and training grants
* **The Program for Investment in Micro-entrepreneurs** (PRIME): $8 million

Agriculture, Rural Development and Related Agencies

* **The Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program (RMAP**): $22.5 million
* **The Rural Business Enterprise Grants (RBEG):** $34 million

These programs fund training and capital for businesses that cannot access these services through the private markets. Micro-businesses are less able to access private financing because they want loans that are smaller than what most small business lenders will make.

SBA’s Microloan Program and PRIME make available the training, consulting and financing that businesses need; Microloan and PRIME make loans and grants to intermediary organizations that tailor and target the delivery of these services to reach microenterprises that cannot access them through the private sector. Even though PRIME is the only federal program that specifically targets first-time, low-income entrepreneurs who need training to start their businesses right, the Administration has proposed to eliminate the program.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to working closely with you to maintain maximum funding for these vital job creation programs for federal fiscal year 2012. If you or your staff have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,