

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 19, 2017

The Honorable Mike Young
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Av., SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Young:

I am pleased to offer my strong support for the Village of Maine's application for Rural Development funding through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

For over 100 years, Wausau Paper Company produced a quality product and provided hundreds of Wisconsinites in Brokaw with good jobs. However, activist hedge funds on Wall Street purchased large stakes in the company and demanded short-term profits at the expense of long-term investment. These changes led to the closure of all Wausau Paper mills in Wisconsin and the subsequent near-bankruptcy of the town of Brokaw, WI. More than 450 employees were laid off. This event led to the overall financial hardship for Brokaw and its residents.

If awarded, USDA funding will be used to make needed improvements to the existing Brokaw water system, correcting deficiencies that will make water rates affordable. Specific improvements include construction of two new wells, retrofitting the water tower and an upgrade to the water distribution system. The improvements will correct the existing deficiencies resulting from the closing of the Wausau Paper Mill, eliminate the current water quality and freezing issues, and greatly improve the system's efficiency. The project will result in a safe and reliable water supply for the residents of Maine and Brokaw and a financially sustainable utility. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's participation is critical to the success of this community effort.

I support projects that directly impact and improve the livelihood of Wisconsin's middle class and for that reason I respectfully request that you give full and fair consideration to the Village of Maine's application. Please keep Jessica Sielaff in my Madison office updated on the progress of this application and contact her should you have further questions or concerns. She may be reached at 30 West Mifflin Street, Suite 700, Madison, Wisconsin 53703, by phone at 608-264-5338, or by email at projects_grants@baldwin.senate.gov. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator