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GILLIBRAND ANNOUNCES USDA FEDERAL SUPPORT TO IMPLEMENT COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION PROJECT IN ESSEX COUNTY

Local Foods, Local Places Initiative to Bolster Agriculture & Economic Opportunities in Keeseville

Keeseville, N.Y. – U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand today announced federal support to implement a comprehensive community revitalization project through the Local Foods, Local Places (LFLP) federal initiative in Keeseville, New York. The LFLP, which is a partnership between the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Transportation, the Appalachian Regional Commission, and the Delta Regional Authority, will provide technical assistance to develop and implement a comprehensive plan for community revitalization with local food access as a major component. The plan will also build on efforts to develop and support new businesses, renovate and repurpose historic buildings, and improve overall quality of life in the community.

The application was submitted by the Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA) on behalf of Keeseville community leaders, farmers and other non-profit organizations, including Adirondack Architectural Heritage (AARCH) and Adirondack Harvest.

“Connecting more of our local farms and communities with federal programs like the Local Food, Local Places initiative serves as an invaluable resource to expand our agricultural industry and improve access to healthy foods for families in Keeseville,” said **Senator Gillibrand, the first New York Senator to serve on the Senate Agriculture Committee in four decades**. “With development projects already underway, this initiative will help push the resurgence of farming and agriculture in the community and also stimulate growth across several industries that are important to residents and businesses in the community.”

“With the resurgence of farming in and around Keeseville and work already in place in the community, the timing is perfect for the type of planning assistance this award will provide.” said **Kate Fish, Executive Director of ANCA**. “We are proud to work with a diverse group of partners to develop a plan that will use local food as a key element in revitalizing this North Country community.”

“As a regional nonprofit organization headquartered in the historic river town of Keeseville, New York, we are thrilled that our community has been selected for the ‘Local Foods, Local Places’ program,” said **Steven Engelhart, Executive Director of Adirondack Architectural Heritage (AARCH)**. “The preservation and rebirth of so many working farms in our area over the last few years makes a strong partnership between farmers, businesses, residents and organizations possible here. This federal planning grant can help Keeseville develop as an economically vibrant center for local food and AARCH is looking forward to participating in this process.”

“Keeseville has great bones - unique old buildings, the mighty AuSable River, and fantastic soils around it with young agrarians starting new farms,” said **Courtney Grimes-Sutton, who opened Mace Chasm Farm in Keeseville with her husband, Asa Thomas-Train, four years ago**. “We are glad to play a role in

this project and are excited to see what the Keeseville community comes up with as we brainstorm about the future of our village.”

The Adirondack North County Association has identified several goals for the LFLP initiative to help organize, including existing development projects. The plan includes increasing usability of Keeseville resources, increasing healthy food access, benefits to low-income and disadvantaged populations, development of green space and park land, as well as recreational opportunities in and around town.

The projects currently underway include a waterfront revitalization plan, including the restoration of an 11,000 square foot Stone Mill owned by AARCH. In addition, the restoration of the civic center owned by the Town of Ausable into a mixed-use building is in the planning phase.

Launched in 2014, LFLP provides technical assistance to communities, farmers, rural businesses, and non-profits, with federal experts providing local leaders with support on solutions to challenges they are facing in expanding economic opportunity for their residents. This technical assistance also includes cutting red tape to ensure communities can better work with federal agencies in accessing funding resources, as well as valuable data to determine what is working and what is not in their development initiatives.

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