



# MALDEF

Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund

---

October 20, 2008

The Honorable Henry M. Paulson  
Secretary  
Department of the Treasury  
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Paulson,

On behalf of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), I am writing to urge the Department of Treasury to ensure diversity in the selection of financial agents to undertake and implement the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act (EESA). I also urge the Treasury to prioritize requests that can provide measurable and meaningful first tier opportunities to Latino and women-owned businesses as subcontractors, as included in Treasury's Notices to Financial Institutions. Founded in 1968, MALDEF is a national nonprofit legal organization that uses litigation, policy advocacy, and community education programs to protect and promote Latino civil rights.

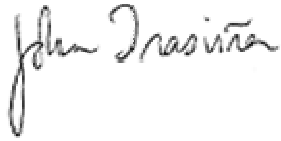
Latino and women-owned business play an important role in our economy. It is estimated that 2.2 million Latino-owned businesses will generate close to \$388.7 billion in revenues in 2008. Projections show that the number of Latino-owned businesses in the United States is expected to grow 41.8 percent in the next six years to 4.3 million, with total revenues surging 39 percent more than \$539 billion. Across the country, 7.7 million businesses are majority-owned by women. These Latino and women-owned businesses work closely with communities most affected by the economic crisis.

While it is necessary for the government to have an expedited timeline for the implementation of the EESA, it is important that, even in times of crisis, the government maintain the diversity that makes our country strong. Therefore, we urge that the Treasury withhold its authority to waive Federal Acquisition Regulations pertaining to minority contracting. The authority for waiver granted under the EESA is unprecedented and risks harming opportunities for Latino and women-owned businesses.

The implementation of the EESA will have a significant impact on our economy. Given the disproportionate effect it will have on the large number of women and minority homeowners caught up in the crisis, it is critical that the Treasury use its authority to ensure diversity in its selection of financial agents to the maximum extent possible by including Latino, women and minority-owned firms. The wide variety of firms available leaves little reason not to include them among the financial agents and subcontractors selected to manage implementation of EESA.

I appreciate your attention to this serious matter and the opportunity to speak with you further regarding my concerns. Please contact Sam Jammal in our Washington, DC office at (202) 293-2828 to coordinate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Trasviña". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

John Trasviña  
President & General Counsel