

Press Release

**Appalachian Regional Commission awards funds to develop local food manufacturing**

**Ithaca, NY, April 16, 2018**

Congressman Tom Reed announced that the Appalachian Regional Commission has approved a \$67,728 grant to the Finger Lakes Regional Prosperity Network (*aka* TCAD Foundation) for a pilot Food Processing Business Incubation Program (FoodBIP). FoodBIP is a technical support program for the local food and beverage manufacturing sector.

"This grant will help manufacturers build necessary connections that will give them a fair chance in the food industry and allow them to grow. I care about bringing more jobs to our region and with this program, I believe that goal can be achieved," Reed said.

The grant will support the growth of food and beverage manufacturers in Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben counties. The FoodBIP will hire a specialist who will help develop a program that will build relations with the entrepreneurial community, share knowledge, encourage supply chain connections, and encourage the region's food and beverage manufacturers to grow. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County is a partner in the program and will implement a web-based information portal for local food businesses. After the first year pilot, the program will be expanded to serve a 12-county Finger Lakes region.

"We are grateful to the Appalachian Regional Commission for the award to pilot the Food Processing Business Incubation Program, known as FoodBIP," says Janet Hawkes, Co-Chair of the Finger Lakes Regional Prosperity Network, which will implement the new program. "These funds will allow FoodBIP to stimulate the growth of the Finger Lakes region's nascent local-foods industry. We are excited to work with farm-based producers as well as small manufacturers. These food and beverage entrepreneurs are eager for additional support to help them connect to their markets and grow jobs."

**About the Finger Lakes Regional Prosperity Network**

FLRPnet serves a rural region extending from the Southern Tier to the Thruway, and from Hornell to Norwich – an area of 8,000 square miles and home to one million people. The largest city is Binghamton with a population of 46,000. Other small cities include Auburn, Canandaigua, Corning, Cortland, Elmira, and Ithaca. FLRPnet sees many opportunities for working towards an economy that creates wealth that stays local, improves the livelihoods of rural communities, and sustains the assets of the region. Learn more at [www.FLRPnet.org](http://www.FLRPnet.org).

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