



BERKSHARES

BerkShares, Inc., P.O. Box 125, Great Barrington, MA 01230

April 1, 2020

Dear Friend,

Every April, BerkShares, Inc. sends letters to current and prospective members inviting them to join our organization. We are writing to you again this year with the hope that you will see our message in a new light.

The COVID-19 pandemic is having devastating effects on our local economy. Our locally-owned businesses in the Berkshires need our support now, more than ever.

The mission of BerkShares, Inc. is and always has been to promote economic self-reliance in the Berkshires. Regional self-reliance for basic necessities such as food, clothing, shelter, and energy helps make communities stronger, more stable, and better able to withstand crises.

Just one of the ways we do that is by running our **local currency** program that keeps money circulating in our community. This is what we are well known for, but we are more than the BerkShares currency alone.

Another important initiative we run is the **Entry to Entrepreneurship** program which exposes new entrepreneurs to tools, skills, mentors, contacts, and other small businesses to set them up for success.

BerkShares, Inc. is also actively engaged in an initiative to identify and facilitate **import replacement** businesses that will help us to use raw materials available here in the Berkshires to create finished goods for consumption here.

Embedded in our organizational structure is a way to facilitate this regional self-reliance through democratic membership. Our members - community stakeholders from across the region - engage in decision making about how to shape our local economy.

A donation entitles you to membership in BerkShares, Inc, and helps us to continue our work building initiatives that support economic self-reliance in the Berkshires. In 2020 and beyond we hope to strengthen and expand these programs, and we look forward to your support.

Sincerely,

Kate Chebatoris & Wendy Healey, Co-Chairs

Rachel Moriarty, Executive Director

Board of Directors: Kate Chebatoris, Catherine Chester, Bob Climo,
Gillette Conner, Tim Geller, Wendy Healey, Jo Valens, Susan Witt