

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 11, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

We urge you to consult with Governors and immediately consider any Disaster Declaration requests pursuant to the Stafford Act for states preparing for and responding to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak. As the number of confirmed cases increases across the United States, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) should utilize the \$42.643 billion currently available in the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) to assist state and local governments in their efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and protect public health. This would not be an unprecedented action, President Clinton issued an Emergency Declaration under the Stafford Act in 2000 for New York and New Jersey and utilized this authority to pay for mosquito abatement. COVID-19 must be addressed swiftly and effectively, with all federal resources made available to impacted communities and tribes.

The DRF is the primary source of funding for the federal government's general disaster relief program. According to the March 6, 2020 *Disaster Relief Fund: Monthly Report - Fiscal Year 2020 Report to Congress*, the DRF has a balance of \$42.643 billion as of February 29, 2020. Under FEMA's administration, the DRF funds three relevant types of activities for the COVID-19 outbreak. The first are predeclaration surge activities, such as deploying response teams and prepositioning equipment. Second, the DRF funds Disaster Readiness and Support (DRS) activities which include all ongoing, non-incident specific FEMA actions. Finally, the DRF also funds Disaster Declaration activities. While a Disaster Declaration must be requested by a governor, if granted, it would allow FEMA to provide emergency protective measures to the state at a 75% federal to 25% state cost share for eligible expenses and activities. According to FEMA's *Public Assistance Program and Policy Guide v3.1*, these eligible expenses include: medically necessary tests and diagnosis; treatment, stabilization, and monitoring; a one-time 30-day supply of prescriptions for acute conditions or to replace maintenance prescriptions; vaccinations for survivors and emergency workers to prevent outbreaks of infectious and communicable diseases; durable medical equipment; consumable medical supplies; temporary facilities, such as tents or portable buildings for treatment of survivors; leased or purchased equipment for use in temporary medical care facilities; security for temporary medical care facilities; use of ambulances for distributing immunizations and setting up mobile medical units; and dissemination of information to the public to provide warnings and guidance about health and safety hazards using various strategies, such as flyers, public service announcements, or newspaper campaigns. Under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207 (the Stafford Act), the President is authorized to grant a Disaster

Declaration for any occasion when federal assistance is needed, and clearly the COVID-19 outbreak demands a swift and adequately resourced federal response.

As of March 10, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported 647 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 25 deaths across 36 states. While the immediate health risk to the majority of the American public is thought to remain low, the challenges of community spread have already begun to strain state and local government responses, particularly health departments. State and local officials are working hard to mitigate the outbreak and protect Americans and ongoing federal resources are badly needed to support those efforts.

It is crucial that your administration employ a whole-of-government approach in responding to COVID-19. This includes working closely with state, local, and tribal officials and providing necessary resources to those on the frontlines. We strongly urge FEMA to stand ready to provide emergency protective measures to prevent and mitigate the spread of disease, save lives, and protect public health and safety, should any state request assistance.

Sincerely,



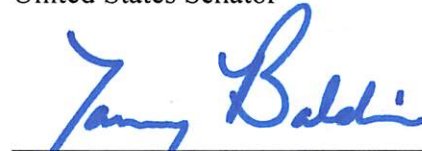
Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator



Patty Murray  
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris  
United States Senator

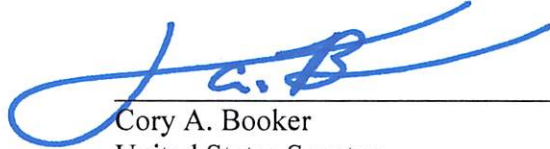


Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator





Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



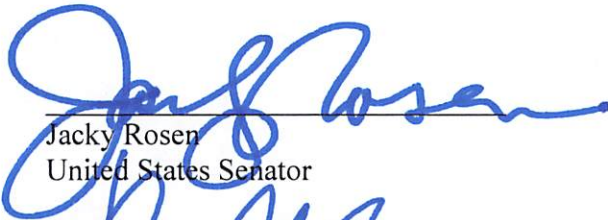
Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator



Brian Schatz  
United States Senator



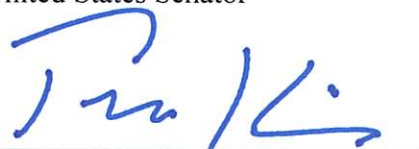
Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator



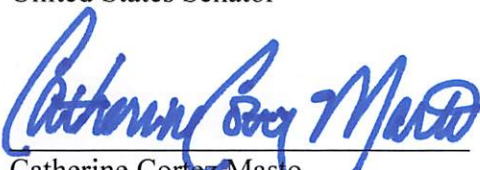
Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator




Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



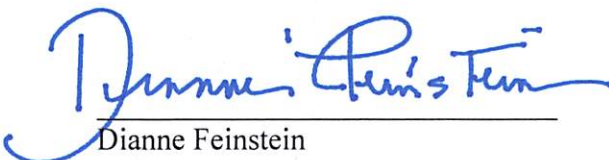
Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



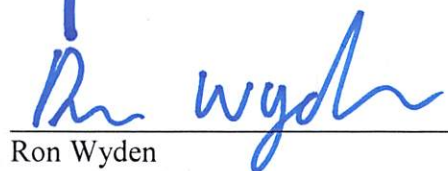
Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



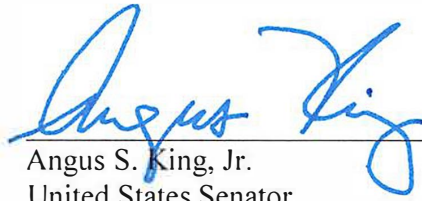
Jack Reed  
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy  
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema  
United States Senator

CC:

- The Honorable Mike Pence, Vice President of the United States of America
- The Honorable Peter Gaynor, Administrator of the US Federal Emergency Management Agency
- The Honorable Chad Wolf, Acting Secretary of the US Department of Homeland Security
- The Honorable Alex Azar, Secretary of the US Department of Health and Human Services
- Governor of Alabama, Kay Ivey
- Governor of Alaska, Mike Dunleavy
- Governor of American Samoa, Lolo Matalasi Moliga
- Governor of Arizona, Doug Ducey
- Governor of Arkansas, Asa Hutchinson
- Governor of California, Gavin Newsom
- Governor of Colorado, Jared Polis
- Governor of Connecticut, Ned Lamont
- Governor of Delaware, John C. Carney Jr.
- Governor of Florida, Ron DeSantis

Governor of Georgia, Brian Kemp  
Governor of Guam, Lou Leon Guerrero  
Governor of Hawaii, David Ige  
Governor of Idaho, Brad Little  
Governor of Illinois, J.B. Pritzker  
Governor of Indiana, Eric Holcomb  
Governor of Iowa, Kim Reynolds  
Governor of Kansas, Laura Kelly  
Governor of Kentucky, Andy Beshear  
Governor of Louisiana, John Bel Edwards  
Governor of Maine, Janet T. Mills  
Governor of Maryland, Larry Hogan  
Governor of Massachusetts, Charles D. Baker  
Governor of Michigan, Gretchen Whitmer  
Governor of Minnesota, Tim Walz  
Governor of Mississippi, Tate Reeves  
Governor of Missouri, Mike Parson  
Governor of Montana, Steve Bullock  
Governor of Nebraska, Pete Ricketts  
Governor of Nevada, Steve Sisolak  
Governor of New Hampshire, Chris Sununu  
Governor of New Jersey, Phil Murphy  
Governor of New Mexico, Michelle Lujan Grisham  
Governor of New York, Andrew Cuomo  
Governor of North Carolina, Roy Cooper  
Governor of North Dakota, Doug Burgum  
Governor of Ohio, Richard Michael DeWine  
Governor of Oklahoma, Kevin Stitt  
Governor of Oregon, Kate Brown  
Governor of Pennsylvania, Tom Wolf  
Governor of Rhode Island, Gina Raimondo  
Governor of South Carolina, Henry McMaster  
Governor of South Dakota, Kristi L. Noem  
Governor of Tennessee, Bill Lee  
Governor of Texas, Greg Abbott  
Governor of the Northern Mariana Islands, Ralph Torres  
Governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Albert Bryan  
Governor of Utah, Gary Herbert  
Governor of Vermont, Phil Scott  
Governor of Virginia, Ralph Northam  
Governor of Washington, Jay Inslee  
Governor of West Virginia, Jim Justice  
Governor of Wisconsin, Tony Evers  
Governor of Wyoming, Mark Gordon