



August 10, 2020

Re: COVID-19 Relief Funding for Local Governments

Dear Members of the California Congressional Delegation:

The California State Association of Counties and the League of California Cities write jointly to stress the critical importance of including robust and direct federal fiscal support for local governments in the next COVID-19 relief bill. Together, our organizations represent 58 counties and 476 cities, all of which are on the front lines of responding to the coronavirus pandemic and leading the economic recovery. With key negotiations underway on the next stimulus package, we urge that local government funding be a priority for inclusion in the legislation so that we can continue working together to protect the health and safety of the individuals who we jointly serve.

The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated local government budgets throughout California, with cities and counties facing budget shortfalls totaling billions of dollars from declining revenues. At the same time that local revenues have plummeted, demands for the critical services that local governments provide have skyrocketed. These public health, emergency response, public safety, social services, behavioral health, homelessness, and other services that support vulnerable populations are needed more than ever during this pandemic.

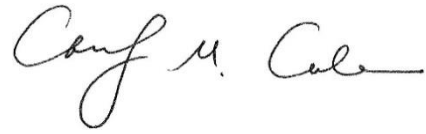
Without significant new federal resources, there will be dire consequences as cities and counties must balance their budgets every year. Absent immediate federal support, we will be unable to meet the ongoing and unprecedented demands for essential services that residents rely on every day. In addition to reducing or eliminating services, local governments will be forced to lay off and furlough employees. Direct federal relief to counties and cities of all sizes is needed to avert these negative outcomes for our residents, employees, and local businesses. It's also critical that federal support be flexible enough to meet the varying demands for public health and emergency response expenses, as well as address revenue shortfalls.

Thank you for your leadership to date in providing much needed support for ongoing local government coronavirus response efforts. There can be no economic recovery at the local level without additional strong support from the federal government. We ask you to continue to advocate for inclusion of robust local government relief funding as a top priority in the final COVID-19 relief bill.

Sincerely,



Graham Knaus
Executive Director
California State Association of Counties



Carolyn M. Coleman
Executive Director
League of California Cities