

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,



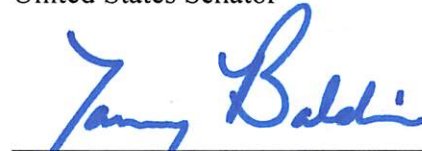
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United States Senator



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



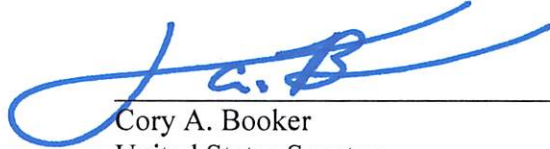
Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



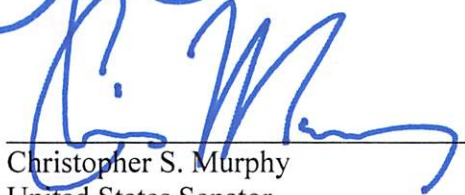
Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



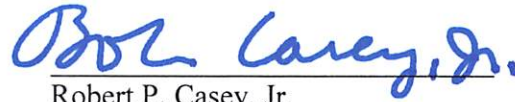
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United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator




Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator




Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



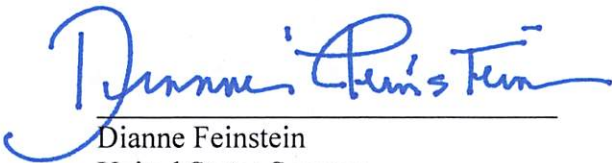
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



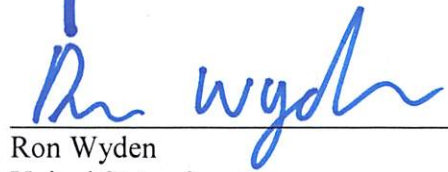
Catherine Cortez Masto
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Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator




Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



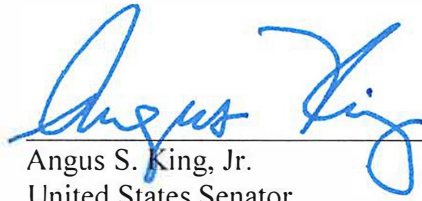
Jack Reed
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy
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Amy Klobuchar
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Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
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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
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Governor of New Mexico, Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor of New York, Andrew Cuomo
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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