



**COUNTY OF LAKE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**
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April 21, 2019

SUBJECT: Interim Emergency Coronavirus Relief Package

Dear Honorable Congressmen Thompson and Garamendi and Senators Feinstein and Harris,

On behalf of the County of Lake, thank you for your leadership during this critical time and your efforts to address the significant health, safety and economic impacts associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you, also, for consistently bearing in mind the needs of rural communities are unique, and should be met, with equity and sufficiency as guiding principles.

As Congress negotiates a potential fourth COVID-19 response package, we urge you to provide direct and flexible funding to county governments of all sizes who are at ground-zero of this unprecedented public health and economic crisis.

As you are aware, California counties operate public hospitals, local public health departments, more than 800 long-term care facilities and 750 behavioral health departments. We are also responsible for emergency operations centers, human services, jail management, 911 services, veterans' services and the "last of the first responders" with coroners and medical examiners, among many other essential county functions.

You will recall Lake County has faced repeated wildfire disasters since 2015, consuming greater than 60% of our County's land mass, and local residents are gravely concerned about the dry winter we have experienced, and implications for the 2020 fire season. Local Fire Districts provide Emergency Medical Services, and the County has critical coordinating responsibilities, including 911 dispatch, that must be well supported at this time, with COVID-19 response likely to overlap fire season. Additionally, local Public Health resources have been stretched and strained, and County support is needed to ensure those crucial functions remain prepared for any possibility.

Given our role at the front lines of this crisis, we strongly urge you to allocate resources directly to counties as most states mandate the implementation of public health and emergency response responsibilities to county governments.

While the CARES Act (P.L. 116-136) provided \$150 billion for unanticipated expenditures for states and local governments, counties with populations below 500,000 are not eligible for direct funding and are instead at the mercy of the state – who are dealing with their own fiscal pressures. Even a significant subset of major urban counties that are eligible for direct assistance under the Coronavirus Relief Fund will now see combined reductions of \$5.1 billion under the U.S. Treasury's guidance because many must now subtract city populations within their county boundaries, despite the fact that these counties are mandated to provide critical public health functions for their entire geographic area.

Given the unique role of counties in our nation's public health and overall community response to this pandemic, we again respectfully urge you to support efforts to allocate resources directly to counties. **We further urge you not to use the outdated CDBG formula for the allocation of funds to local governments.**

As you can appreciate, meeting needs associated with unprecedented emergency response, while anticipating substantial decreases in revenue, requires robust reassurance from our federal government, and we greatly appreciate your ongoing advocacy. Your leadership and partnership is truly indispensable.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue further with your team and are committed to a solution that helps our nation mitigate, respond and recover from these historic times.

Sincerely,

Mokey Simon, Chair