

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

March 31, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Governor Murphy has formally requested a federal cost share waiver for all COVID-19 related response and recovery actions in New Jersey. Our state is now battling the second highest number of COVID-19 cases in the nation, and we are writing to urge you to approve this request to ensure New Jersey has the resources it needs to combat this pandemic.

We appreciate the measure you took last week in declaring the COVID-19 pandemic a major disaster for New Jersey, which allows FEMA to assist communities through Direct Federal Assistance and Public Assistance for Emergency Protective Measures at federal cost share of 75%. Unfortunately, cases have only increased and the worst is likely still to come. Boosting the federal cost share will allow state and local governments to concentrate on controlling and mitigating the outbreak of COVID-19 without being limited by growing costs and strained budgets.

This crisis has created dual financial pressures that have squeezed the state on both the revenue and expenditure side of the ledger. The aggressive action the state took to impose a mandatory shutdown of all non-essential businesses has undoubtedly helped to slow the spread of the virus, but it has also caused state and local revenues to plummet. Likewise, the massive response costs the state has incurred on expenses ranging from purchasing personal protective equipment (PPE) to adding more hospital bed space, are immediately necessary, but also very expensive. These costs will only increase as cases continue to grow and our healthcare providers run precariously low on standard medical equipment. FEMA is authorized to increase its federal cost share to 100% of response and recovery costs “if warranted by the needs of the disaster”. If there ever was a time when a 100% cost share was warranted, now is that time.

We urge you to swiftly approve Governor Murphy’s request for a federal cost share waiver for all COVID-19 response and recovery actions in New Jersey. During these challenging times, we

need to come together and leverage all resources, at every level of government, to end the COVID-19 pandemic. We appreciate your consideration of the request.

Sincerely,

ROBERT MENENDEZ
United States Senator

TOM MALINOWSKI
Member of Congress

CORY A. BOOKER
United States Senator

FRANK PALLONE, JR.
Member of Congress

BILL PASCRELL, JR.
Member of Congress

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress

ALBIO SIRES
Member of Congress

BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN
Member of Congress

DONALD NORCROSS
Member of Congress

MIKIE SHERRILL
Member of Congress

DONALD PAYNE, JR.
Member of Congress

ANDY KIM
Member of Congress

JOSH GOTTHEIMER
Member of Congress

JEFF VAN DREW
Member of Congress