

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 24, 2020

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

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

President Trump, Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader McCarthy,

We write today to stress the importance and urgency of providing financial assistance to state and local governments in COVID-19 relief. Our state and local governments are already facing strained budgets due to the coronavirus, and now must respond to the damage from a major storm. Without federal assistance, our states are unable to respond as effectively to this disaster.

State and local governments are already dealing with the increased costs of attempting to combat the coronavirus. In addition, the financial consequences of reduced economic activity due to COVID-19 are causing major budget cuts and will continue to lead to cuts to essential services in the future if aid isn't provided. The loss of revenue and job cuts this causes will slow our economic recovery, with economists estimating that it could cost more than 5 million jobs.¹

The need for assistance has only been made more urgent with the damage the Midwest experienced on Monday, August 10th, 2020. The derecho that swept across Iowa, Illinois, and Indiana included 100 MPH winds, left millions of Americans without power, flattened tens of millions of acres of crops,² and damaged homes, stores, and schools across the region. As of this

¹ <https://www.epi.org/blog/state-and-local-governments-have-lost-1-5-million-jobs-since-february-federal-aid-to-states-and-localities-is-necessary-for-a-strong-economic-recovery/>

² <https://farmpolicynews.illinois.edu/2020/08/derecho-damage-begins-to-unfold-estimated-37-7-million-acres-of-farmland-impacted/>

writing, thousands are still without electricity, and our farmers are grappling with the two-fold destruction of their crops in the field as well as damage to the grain bins storing last year's harvest.

A Federal Major Disaster Declaration was issued for Iowa approving assistance for 16 counties, following a request from Gov. Kim Reynolds which outlined more than \$3.9 billion in damage. This will provide critical support for Iowans to rebuild their homes, schools, roads, and businesses. In addition, state declarations have been made for additional counties in Iowa and Illinois, where the derecho caused at least 12 separate tornadoes.

As vital as this aid will be for rebuilding our communities, our local officials need assistance now, so that they can fully respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters like this derecho. Further, our local governments need certainty so that they can actually plan for disasters without worrying about whether Congress will actually support them in their time of need.

We appreciate the actions you have led so far to help Americans deal with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, but more must be done. Our state and local governments need financial assistance like that provided in the Heroes Act to avoid budget cuts, and that need only becomes more urgent in the face of natural disasters like this one.

Sincerely,



Cindy Axne
Member of Congress



Bill Foster
Member of Congress



Abby Finkenauer
Member of Congress



Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress



Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress



Sean Casten
Member of Congress