



December 18, 2020

Senator Bob Casey  
200 N Third St, Suite 14A  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Senator Casey:

I write to you as President of the Pennsylvania Municipal League. The League represents over 116 full service cities, boroughs, towns and townships within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania who strongly support flexible, direct emergency fiscal assistance to all local governments.

Since the pandemic started, Pennsylvania municipalities have provided front-line troops in fighting COVID-19 – first responders, health care workers, public safety officials and emergency response personnel. These responsibilities, in addition to the devastating economic impacts of the Coronavirus, have left us struggling to avoid layoffs, furloughs and reductions in public service.

On December 14, you and your colleagues debuted a much-awaited COVID-19 aid package, comprised of two bills, totaling \$908 billion. One bill, bundles together state and local aid and liability protection, and provides \$160 billion for state, local and tribal relief. While this legislation highlights the importance of providing emergency relief to local governments, the decision to separate state and local aid from the broader relief package ignores the reality Pennsylvania's communities are facing right now. Furthermore, the League does not support language that would curtail the Federal Reserve's lending authority, specifically to local municipalities. We believe this measure would have a negative impact on Pennsylvania's communities.

**Our top policy priority remains local budget relief for cities, boroughs, towns and townships to partially offset revenue losses and unbudgeted emergency expenditures that local governments have made and continue to make for the health and safety of our communities.**

In addition to that priority, we urge you to include the following technical changes in the final COVID-19 emergency aid package:

**1. Adjust FEMA cost-share upwards**

To help local governments offset the costs associated with the current national emergency response to this ongoing pandemic, Congress should include key provisions within H.R. 8266, the FEMA Assistance Relief Act of 2020, including adjusting the FEMA cost-share for all COVID-19 related Emergency and Major Disaster declarations to 100 percent. Additionally, Congress should include provisions within H.R. 8266 that would adjust the FEMA cost-share for all emergencies and major disaster declared in 2020 to not less than 90 percent federal and 10 percent non-federal, as well as a vital provision that would clarify that FEMA – under COVID-19 declarations – should continue to reimburse for certain expenses including personal protective equipment (PPE) for public schools, public transit, public utilities, courthouses and other government buildings and services.

## **2. Enhanced Flexibility for Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF)**

States and localities need more flexibility to use already appropriated CRF funding than is provided by the CARES Act. Amending CARES Act language to enhance flexibility for CRF by making “replacement of lost revenue” an eligible expenditure would meaningfully aid state, county, and municipal governments. We recommend CARES Act language be revised to read: *Title VI, Sec 601 (d):(1) are necessary expenditures or lost revenue incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).*

## **3. Deadline Extension for Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF)**

States and localities are facing an imminent deadline to spend down all Coronavirus Relief Funds or return the balance to the U.S. Treasury. Early regulatory uncertainty created a challenging environment for state and local governments to confidently make eligible expenditures or payments 2

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Any questions or comments can be directed to Rick Schuettler, Executive Director, at [rschuettler@pml.org](mailto:rschuettler@pml.org) or Amy Sturges, Director of Governmental Affairs, at [asturges@pml.org](mailto:asturges@pml.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard J. Schuettler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Richard J. Schuettler  
Executive Director



December 18, 2020

Senator Pat Toomey  
320 Market Street  
Suite 475E  
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Senator Toomey:

I write to you as President of the Pennsylvania Municipal League. The League represents over 116 full service cities, boroughs, towns and townships within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania who strongly support flexible, direct emergency fiscal assistance to all local governments.

Since the pandemic started, Pennsylvania municipalities have provided front-line troops in fighting COVID-19 – first responders, health care workers, public safety officials and emergency response personnel. These responsibilities, in addition to the devastating economic impacts of the Coronavirus, have left us struggling to avoid layoffs, furloughs and reductions in public service.

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Richard J. Schuettler  
Executive Director