



November 24, 2020

Dear Members of Congress:

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.

The Pennsylvania Economy League conducted a survey of 430 municipalities this fall and found that 23 communities said they may now apply for Act 47 status as a result of their current financial pressures. As you are aware, Act 47 is a Pennsylvania statute outlining procedures to stabilize municipalities undergoing financial distress. The Act empowers the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development to declare certain municipalities as financially distressed. The survey responses are a clear indication that Pennsylvania's local communities are struggling. While these 23 communities are only a small portion of the 2,560 municipalities in the state, it's a significant number considering only 31 have enrolled in Act 47 since its inception in 1987.

As a second wave of the virus hits, Pennsylvania's local economies are still in jeopardy. While the first federal relief bill was helpful, in truth, very few of the funds went to Pennsylvania's local governments, with only one city qualifying for direct funding. This is unacceptable in our view and must be corrected. We are extremely concerned that if funds fail to materialize, Pennsylvania's municipalities will be irreparably harmed both economically and in our ability to maintain essential services.

We ask that you do everything in your power to provide direct fiscal assistance to Pennsylvania's cities, boroughs, towns and townships. Do not subject us to another economic tsunami that will leave us further behind in our efforts to revitalize our local economies and rebuild our future.

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 or Amy Sturges, Director of Governmental Affairs, at asturges@pml.org.

Sincerely,

Councilmember Derek Green, Esq., Philadelphia
President

Richard J. Schuettler
Executive Director