

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

April 9, 2020

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

Dear President Trump:

We write as Members of the Maryland Congressional Delegation in strong support of the April 2, 2020, request from the National Governors Association (NGA) to waive all applicable cost-sharing requirements for assistance under your Emergency Declaration and related Major Disaster Declarations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We urge you to expeditiously approve this bipartisan NGA request from Governor Larry Hogan of Maryland and Governor Andrew Cuomo of New York, acting in their capacities as NGA Chair and Vice Chair, respectively.

You have declared the COVID-19 pandemic a national emergency and issued numerous state disaster declarations. The nation faces an unprecedented emergency that requires an urgent and coordinated response from local, state, and federal government officials, as well as the private sector and the American people. State and local governments are taking appropriate steps to save lives, and the vast majority of governors have issued “stay at home” orders to their residents, with exceptions for essential personnel and operations.

However, states are nevertheless limited by both a lack of resources and legal budgetary constraints. Increasing the federal cost share will allow state and local governments to focus solely on responding, containing, and mitigating the outbreak of COVID-19. States should not be forced to worry about rising costs and budgetary limits that could hamper their efforts to best save lives, protect vulnerable populations, and safeguard the health of our communities as they see fit during this pandemic.

State emergency management agencies are rapidly working to secure an adequate supply of ventilators; Personal Protective Equipment (PPE); testing, collection, and pharmacy materials; and mobile laboratories and examination centers. Maryland, for example, still remains without many of its requested items from FEMA, and the federal government is now encouraging states to try to obtain these critical supplies from other sources with the promise of reimbursement in the future.

The federal government has taken steps to raise the federal cost-share in previous circumstances, such as after devastating hurricanes and flooding. However, this global pandemic represents a new type of disaster on a vastly wider scale. As U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams said last weekend, these upcoming weeks will be the “hardest and saddest” for “most Americans' lives...this is going to be our Pearl Harbor moment, our 9/11 moment, only it's not going to be localized, it's going to be happening all over the country, and I want America to understand that.”

We therefore request that you expeditiously waive all applicable cost-sharing requirements for assistance relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. We thank you for your consideration of this request and look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

/s/ Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

/s/ Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator

/s/ Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress

/s/ C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
Member of Congress

/s/ John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress

/s/ Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress

/s/ Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

/s/ David Trone
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Chad Wolf, Acting Secretary of Homeland Security

The Honorable Peter T. Gaynor, Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency

The Honorable MaryAnn E. Tierney, Regional Administrator for FEMA Region III