

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

July 2, 2020

The Honorable Peter T. Gaynor
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street SW
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Administrator Gaynor:

As the federal Congressional delegation, we strongly support the State of Maryland's efforts to begin the long road to recovery during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. As such, we ask you to take immediate action to strengthen resiliency and mitigate future damages due this pandemic or future public health emergencies.

Recovery from this unprecedented event will test the limits of state and local resources, thus federal assistance fills critical gaps in recovery activities while relieving pressure to cut back on public services and staffing levels. In addition, grant funds to reduce the impact of future pandemics, and disasters more broadly, will help alleviate the economic damage faced by Marylanders.

We respectfully request the authorization of increasing the federal cost share for eligible Public Assistance program expenses to 100 percent, up from the current allocation of 75 and 25 percent. As authorized by the Stafford Act, the Public Assistance program provides funding for emergency measures and resources needed to respond to major disasters and emergencies. Attached to the program is a typical 75 percent federal, 25 percent non-federal match for eligible costs. This means local and state agencies will be responsible for potentially millions of dollars in response costs for COVID-19. The Administration is authorized to reimburse eligible activities at a 100 percent federal share when the disaster is catastrophic in nature. Maryland Governor Larry Hogan has submitted a request for a 100 percent federal cost-share for this disaster. The established per capita indicator for FEMA to consider an increased cost share is \$149. This first wave of the virus is estimated to have an impact that equals approximately \$173 per resident in the state, well above the cost involved with requesting additional fiscal support from FEMA.

Reimbursing Maryland for 100 percent of eligible incurred costs would have significant benefits to Marylanders, including:

- Lessening the burden on local communities who are facing significant financial hardship.
- Simplifying the reimbursement process, thus reducing staff time and costs during the recovery process.

- Ensuring that recovery resources are available when needed throughout recovery.
- Allowing state agencies to invest other funds otherwise devoted to recovery for preparedness activities for the anticipated second wave of COVID-19.
- Allowing local jurisdictions to leverage all available federal funds more effectively to ensure the most efficient recovery across all parts of the community.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request during this ongoing pandemic. We 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/ Kweisi Mfume
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 MaryAnn E. Tierney, Regional Administrator for FEMA Region III