

December 18, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
United States Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
United States Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Minority Leader
United States Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Joe Manchin
United States Senator
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rob Portman
United States Senator
448 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitt Romney
United States Senator
124 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
United States Senator
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Cassidy
United States Senator
520 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Special Districts Inclusion in Bipartisan State and Local Government COVID-19 Relief Bill

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer, and Senators Manchin, Portman, Romney, Collins, Murkowski, and Cassidy,

On behalf of more than 30,000 special districts providing critical infrastructure, emergency response and community enrichment services to millions of Americans – including many of your constituents – we deeply appreciate the inclusion of special districts’ access to state and local government COVID-19 relief, as proposed in the Senators Manchin, Portman, Romney, Collins, Murkowski and Cassidy’s draft “Bipartisan State and Local Support and Small Business Protections Act.”

While this is a major milestone for the nation’s special districts (defined in the proposal as “special-purpose public entities”), **we must respectfully request clarification in language currently proposed to include “special-purpose public entities” in this access to ensure that communities depending on special districts to provide critical infrastructure and essential services are not again left out of the sorely needed state and local government pandemic relief.**

Specifically, the proposed text sets aside up to five percent of states’ allocation to be reserved for “*special-purpose public entities [...] that perform essential public health and safety functions related to the COVID-19 pandemic*” and “*multi-state entities [...] involved in the transportation of passengers or cargo.*” **As drafted, this could lead to exclusion of – or create significant obstacles for –** special districts that provide communities with water, wastewater, irrigation, electricity and other public utilities, recreation and park, library, natural resource conservation, and mosquito abatement services, air quality management, and potentially districts essential to the nation’s commerce that provide port, harbor, navigation and airport services.

Accordingly, **we respectfully request modification to the language in Sec. 602 (b)(2)(ii)(I) of the proposal to include independent special districts that provide any Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (“CISA”) designated “critical infrastructure sector” service as well as, where applicable, services states may consider to be essential during the pandemic, namely parks and recreation services necessary for**

physical health and mental well-being as well as child-care and after-school services. We urge you to consider adopting the language from the bipartisan S. 4308, the Special Districts Provide Essential Services Act, to provide certainty for these special districts' access relief funds.

Given that special districts across the country have struggled to access Coronavirus Relief Fund (CARES Act) monies through their respective states, counties, or cities to date, we are *grateful* for the explicit inclusion of special districts in the "Coronavirus Local Community Stabilization Fund." This is especially significant for frontline emergency services and healthcare districts. We applaud your efforts to grant their access to this critical program while asking you to consider the same for all pandemic-impacted special districts able to demonstrate need to their respective states.

We look forward to working with you and your staff on this urgent issue for the special districts providing essential services to your communities and employing your constituent essential workers.

Sincerely,



Peter Bonkrude
President
Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California



Kristine Stratton
President & Chief Executive Officer
National Recreation and Park Association



Mark Landauer
Executive Director
Oregon Public Ports Association



David Reynolds
Director of Federal Relations
Association of California Water Agencies



Kathi Kromer
Associate Executive Director
American Library Association



Peter M. Murphy
President & Chief Executive Officer
Illinois Association of Park Districts



Dale Pierson
Executive Director
Rural Water Association of Utah



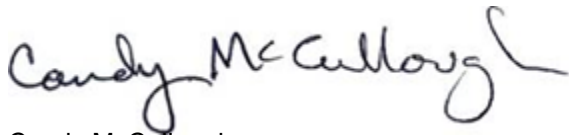
Ian Lyle
Executive Vice President
National Water Resources Association



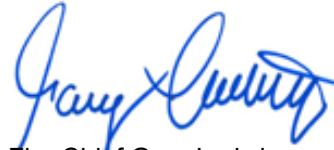
Matthew Duarte
Executive Director
California Recreation and Park Districts



Catherine Martin
Executive Director
California Association of Healthcare Districts



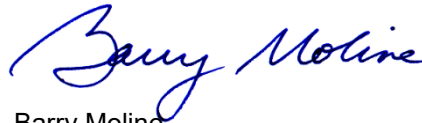
Candy McCullough
President
National Association of Emergency and Fire Officials



Fire Chief Gary Ludwig
President and Chairman of the Board
International Association of Fire Chiefs



Rich Cowger
President
Montana Fire Chiefs Association



Barry Moline
Executive Director
California Municipal Utilities Association



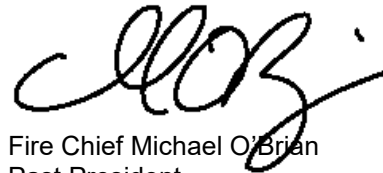
Chief Steve Kovacs
President
Fire Districts Association of California



Joshua Green
General Manager
Cosumnes Community Services District



Chief Scott Frandsen
President
Missouri Association of Fire Chiefs



Fire Chief Michael O'Brian
Past President
Michigan Association of Fire Chiefs



Neil McCormick
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California Special Districts Association



Ann Terry
Executive Director
Special Districts Association of Colorado



Fred Crawford
Executive Director
Florida Association of Special Districts



Frank Stratton
Executive Director
Special Districts Association of Oregon



LeGrand Bitter
Executive Director
Utah Association of Special Districts

CC: Senator Kyrsten Sinema
Congressman John Garamendi