

Van Doren: Governor Must Distribute CARES Act Funds Now

Hunterdon Freeholders Freeze Tax Rate, Approve No Debt Capital Plan, Now Governor Must Hold Up His End

Saying the Hunterdon County Freeholders have held up their end by freezing the County tax rate for the second year in a row, Freeholder Board Director Shaun C. Van Doren has called on New Jersey's Governor to now "hold up the state's end" by reimbursing County governments and their taxpayers for COVID-19 related expenses, from the \$250 million federal CARES Act fund specifically designated for local governments.

"Hunterdon County's Freeholders have made significant fiscally conservative decisions to hold up our end during the health and economic crisis. The tax rate was held steady for the second year in a row, a no-debt capital improvement plan was approved for the sixth year in a row, and the County continues to provide substantial funds for emergency and public health pandemic response.

Now the Governor must hold up his end and distribute the federal funding designated to reimburse Counties, which has been available for over three months," Van Doren said.

Since April the state has had CARES Act funds for local governments that is designed to be distributed to Hunterdon County and eleven other New Jersey counties that were shut out of direct aid because of having populations under 500,000.

Van Doren pointed out, "Hunterdon and other Counties have been providing funds for operating COVID-19 test sites, distributing PPE's to first responders, providing public health and emergency management assistance to municipalities, and making infrastructure improvements to protect the health of employees and residents who need in person County services. These are all costs that qualify for CARES Act reimbursement."

The Freeholder Director noted, "There has been a bi-partisan effort calling on the Governor to release the aid. This includes the other eleven Freeholder Boards in the Counties that have been shut out of CARES Act aid, that have both Democratic and Republican leadership. Also Senators Mike Doherty and Kip Bateman, and Senate Minority Leader Tom Kean, and many from New Jersey's congressional delegation, including Hunterdon's 7th District Congressman Tom Malinowski."

Van Doren concluded, "If, as the Governor says we are all in this together, it is time for him to show it now and recognize the job County governments are doing to help and protect our residents by distributing the CARES Act funds."

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