

The Hunterdon Report
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Hunterdon Joins Other Counties Petitioning For Fair Share of CARES Act Funding

Governor Has \$250 Million Fund Not Being Distributed

Hunterdon County's Freeholder Board has joined eleven other counties that were shut out of federal CARES Act funding in petitioning Governor Phil Murphy to reimburse county governments for extraordinary expenses incurred in combating the COVID-19 health crisis from a \$250 million state fund specifically designated for local governments, under the federal act.

Freeholder John E. Lanza stated, "The Governor has yet to release any of the \$250 million local government funding, while county governments continue to spend millions in limited property taxpayer dollars battling the COVID-19. Our taxpayers are entitled to their fair share of the funding."

Atlantic, Burlington, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Hunterdon, Mercer, Morris, Salem, Somerset, Sussex, and Warren counties were all denied CARES Act funding when the relief was approved in April because of county populations under 500,000.

The federal relief funds, however, specifically allocated \$250 million in CARES Act monies to the Local Government Relief Fund in the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), to be used to reimburse local governments and their taxpayers for COVID-19 related expenses, according to the New Jersey Association of Counties (NJAC).

Lanza, the Board's liaison to NJAC, added, "Hunterdon's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) has fielded over 900 resource requests from local governments, medical providers, first responder units, and long term care facilities, since the beginning of the pandemic. The County has funded a COVID-19 test site, provided thousands of PPE's, and has installed health protective infrastructure throughout county offices since the pandemic began. The state has an obligation to distribute the funding earmarked for those actions."

The resolution approved unanimously by the Hunterdon Freeholder Board on July 7th, states, ‘County governments have led the way on the front lines and played a vital role in providing essential services and protecting the public health, safety, and welfare of residents across the Garden State, during this once in a generation pandemic.

Additionally, the resolution notes, ‘under the CARES Act, the State of New Jersey received \$2.5 billion in federal monies to alleviate the staggering financial burden imposed by the COVID19 public health crisis, of which the United States Department of Treasury authorized providing much-needed relief for local governing bodies that did not receive direct aid because their populations fell below 500,000 residents.’

The resolution was distributed to the Governor, federal representatives, state legislative leaders and legislators.