



Ohio Municipal League
175 S Third St., Ste. 510
Columbus, OH 43215

May 1, 2020

Dear Congressperson:

Thank you for your leadership in advocating for the needs of local governments at the federal level. We are grateful for all the work you are doing to respond to the needs of Ohio's cities and villages as they serve on the front lines of the ongoing battle against the COVID-19 pandemic.

As you are aware, Ohio's municipalities are facing potentially crippling cuts in revenues as the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic continues. Cities and villages deliver critical services that our communities depend upon now more than ever. Ohioans deserve access to clean water, functional wastewater systems, local sanitation services and a comprehensive force of first responders. As municipal leaders face increasingly steep cuts in revenue, many are being forced to make staffing cuts that will impede the ability of Ohio's cities and villages to deliver those quality services.

We ask that Congress pass a phase 4 federal coronavirus relief package with funding for local governments that can be used to support and stabilize municipal budgets without population restrictions. We also request that Congress allow revenues that are left over from phase 3 funding to be repurposed to stabilize local budgets.

We know Congressional leaders recognize that not all municipalities will have large personal protective equipment (PPE) expenses; however, the operating budgets in every single city and village in Ohio will suffer tremendous and long-lasting consequences from the largest health crisis in American history. Without flexible funding, our municipalities will struggle to support critical services like police, fire and EMS personnel to the level they did before the pandemic and to the standard our residents and businesses expect and require.

The Ohio Municipal League and our 730 member cities and villages call on Congress to take further steps that will provide meaningful assistance to municipalities as they work to recover from the economic impacts of COVID-19. We ask that Congress:

- Waive all federal cost shares requirements for FEMA grants. Raising the federal cost share has been done after many major disasters, such as Hurricanes Sandy and Irma.

- Make state and local governments eligible for the emergency paid leave tax credits that were provided to the private sector in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.
- Restore Advance Refunding of Tax-Exempt Bonds (H.R. 2772). Restoring the ability for governments and other qualifying entities to advance refund tax-exempt municipal bonds would free up billions of dollars that local governments could spend on other projects.

This is not a final list of the actions municipalities will need from our federal partners, but these requests reflect some of the most immediate areas where congressional action can make a difference in Ohio's hometowns.

Rebuilding strong local economies will be a vital part of restoring a strong economy in Ohio and nationwide. We do not believe that forcing municipalities to declare bankruptcy is the best strategy for the economic recovery that our country needs. However, without meaningful relief from the federal government, cities and villages across the state will be facing these types of potentially catastrophic decisions with the real potential for complete insolvency.

We ask that Congress continue to invest in our nation's economic future by providing robust, flexible funding to our local communities. We appreciate this critical partnership as we work together to rebuild a strong, vital economy.

Sincerely,



Kent Scarrett
Executive Director
Ohio Municipal League