

September 2, 2020

Governor Jay Inslee  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Governor Inslee,

This letter is in follow-up to Clark County's June 3, 2020 letter regarding the inappropriately limited CARES Act funding provided to local governments with a population of less than 500,000. The state's continued refusal to provide all local governments with the equitable share of the CARES Act funding inhibits Clark County's ability to financially respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, and violates the federal Department of Treasury (DOT) guidance. We continue to request your assistance in ensuring that all Washingtonians, in large and smaller counties, have access to these critical federal funds to support vital public health efforts, ensure safe school environments, and help struggling small businesses.

An important component of the CARES Act funding was direct relief to states, as well as local governments. Washington State received \$1.329B CARES Act Title V money intended for local governments. For counties and cities with a population less than 500,000, including Clark County, the state appropriated less than \$297M of the total CARES Act funding. The funding is intended to pay for expenses related to the COVID-19 pandemic that are incurred between March 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020, and represents 55% of the funding legally available for smaller counties and cities.

As detailed in our June, 2020 letter, the state's refusal to appropriate Clark County's full \$88.35M violates the federal DOT guidance. Furthermore, the inadequate funding drastically impairs our ability to respond to the pandemic in Clark County. If Clark County is allocated the full \$88M in proportional CARES Act funding, we would be able to more adequately respond to the pandemic in these ways:

	<u>With existing CARES Act funds</u>	<u>With full appropriation</u>
Public health expenses	\$12.45M	\$27.45M
Payroll for public employees dedicated to COVID-19	\$402,500	\$6.5M
Expenses to facilitate compliance with COVID-19 safety measures	\$3.98M	\$18.98M
Economic supports	\$550,000	\$20.6M
Other	\$3.3M	\$11.5M

Here are specific examples if Clark County is appropriated the full CARES Act funding of \$88M:

- \$10M to support local school districts as they prepare their physical building spaces to be prepared for students to safely return to school. Clark County is home to some of the largest school districts in the state, including Vancouver Public Schools and Evergreen Public Schools.
- \$20M to support small businesses, including local restaurants and retailers that are particularly struggling during the pandemic.
- \$15M in additional public health expenses to ensure the critical work necessary to address this pandemic can continue.

The intent of the CARES Act funding for local governments is to ensure local public health jurisdictions have rapid access to funds necessary to protect the public and limit the spread of the novel coronavirus. The Department of Commerce and OFM are acting in contravention of this intent, and are making it more difficult to access the funds at the time they are critically needed.

We look forward to continuing to partner with you as we address this unprecedented situation, and anticipate your response to these important concerns.

Sincerely,

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Eileen O'Brien, Council Chair

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Temple Lentz, Councilor District 1

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John Blom, Councilor District 3

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Julie Olson, Councilor District 2

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Gary Medvigy, Councilor District 4