

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

August 3, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United State Senate  
S-230, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United State Senate  
S-221, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives  
H-232, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
H-204, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Leader McCarthy:

We write today calling for additional time for state, local, territorial, and tribal governments to use the funds allocated to them by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency. States are using these funds for a variety of initiatives responsive to the pandemic, including programs to build broadband infrastructure to improve their residents' ability to work, learn, and receive health care remotely. We believe that it is necessary for Congress to take action in order to support state and local governments' commitments to fund efforts like broadband construction. Accordingly, in addition to noting the urgent need for additional overall funding for state and local governments, we call for an extension beyond the current deadline of December 30, 2020 for states and local governments to use funds from the CARES Act.

The CARES Act created the Coronavirus Relief Fund, appropriating \$150 billion for state and local governments to support efforts to address pandemic-related costs necessary to save lives and bolster the economy. Congress granted state and local governments significant flexibility in how to use these federal dollars. Many states are using these funds for broadband expansion in a permissible use of CARES Act funds, which is an approach that is necessary and responsive to the COVID-19 emergency.

Congress must take action to support our local communities, both in terms of extending the deadline for use of CARES Act funds and providing substantial new funding for state and local governments overall. We note our deep disappointment that the recently-announced Health, Economic Assistance, Liability Protection and Schools (HEALS) Act provides no additional funding for state, local, territorial, and tribal governments. Extending the timeline for the use of the Coronavirus Relief Fund in no way reduces the importance of providing additional state and local funding in any upcoming COVID-19 relief package.

Along with providing additional state and local funding, extending the period of time in which state and local governments can use those CARES Act funds can also assist a greater number of time-intensive projects like broadband construction in coming online and assisting in the pandemic response and recovery. Congress should make every effort to support those states and local governments that choose to use the Coronavirus Relief Fund for critical infrastructure projects, including efforts to expand broadband to meet the increased need for telehealth and remote learning.

As the pandemic has evolved, and it becomes clear that the effects of COVID-19 will remain with us for some time, we must provide our state and local governments with not only additional time to effectively deploy emergency relief funds but also greater overall funding to respond to the emerging needs within our communities as this crisis persists. Again, we strongly urge that the next COVID-19 relief legislation includes additional financial resources for state, local, territorial, and tribal governments, while also extending the deadline placed on the use of the Coronavirus Relief Fund. Both of those actions will greatly assist our communities in their relief efforts.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator



Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress



Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress