



**DOWNTOWN
LONG BEACH
ALLIANCE**

The Honorable Alan Lowenthal
Representative, CA District 47
108 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

August 5, 2020

RE: Direct Federal Assistance to Local Governments

Dear Representative Lowenthal:

On behalf of the Downtown Long Beach Alliance Board of Directors and our 1,600+ member businesses, I urge you to support \$500 billion in direct and flexible federal assistance to local governments of all sizes to sustain core services for our residents and to support public health and economic recovery in our communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted municipal budgets across the country in ways that local governments could not have foreseen. Serving on the front lines of fighting this pandemic, California cities have stepped up by enacting emergency orders, setting up testing, protecting residents, supporting vulnerable populations, and helping Main Street businesses stay afloat. These actions have saved lives, but they have come at a cost. This unprecedented and multifaceted COVID-19 response, including the shutdown of our local economies, has left California cities facing a nearly \$7 billion revenue shortfall over the next two years. This shortfall continues to grow by billions of dollars as modified stay-at-home orders have extended into the summer months. At the same time, California cities have incurred significant unplanned expenditures.

Without significant new federal resources to offset expenses and address revenue shortfalls due to COVID-19, cities, who are required to balance their budgets every year, have no choice but to reduce or eliminate critical public services that our residents rely upon and layoff city employees. In a recent survey by the League of California Cities, ninety percent of cities say they will have to cut staff or decrease city services to residents, and nearly seventy-five percent of cities report they may have to take both actions. The City of Long Beach is currently facing a \$30 million budget shortfall for the coming fiscal year, including the elimination of 136 positions and reduced access to public libraries. Proposed budget cuts also include reduced public park maintenance and \$11 million in employee furloughs.

Cities need Congress to deliver this assistance with no minimum population threshold determining eligibility for funding to all of our communities now. We cannot afford to wait. The funding provided through the CARES Act was not enough to ensure that all local governments have the resources to stabilize local budgets and continue delivering local services, fighting this pandemic and supporting local recovery.

Cities are the economic engines of our state and the backbone of this nation. Recovery from this unprecedented crisis will only be realized at the local level with strong support from the federal government. We implore you to provide this assistance to our cities, so that we can continue to be your strong partner in California. Sincerely,

Kraig Kojian, President & CEO

CC:

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker United States House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Minority Leader United States House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer, Minority Leader United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510