



April 9, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

On behalf of the nation's fire and emergency service, we ask you to waive all federal cost-share requirements for assistance under your Emergency Declaration and any superseding Major Disaster Declarations in response to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

Our members are serving on the front line of the nation's response to COVID-19, the illness resulting from exposure to the novel coronavirus. Every day, our members respond to emergency medical services (EMS) calls, providing first aid and ambulatory transportation for patients suffering COVID-19 symptoms. Currently, the nation's fire departments are desperate for supplies like personal protective equipment, masks, gowns and sanitizing agents to protect their staff from contracting COVID-19. As they work to serve their communities, fire and EMS personnel are being exposed to COVID-19 and placed into quarantine or isolation, which creates increasing overtime and backfill costs for departments. These escalating supply and personnel costs are draining fire departments' budgets across the nation. Meanwhile, their long-term ability to support COVID-19 response operations is threatened as local cities and counties face decreasing tax revenues in the face of "stay-at-home" orders and "social distancing" guidelines.

On March 13, you declared a national emergency under Section 501(b) of the Stafford Act. This provision allows the President to determine that "an emergency exists for which the primary responsibility for response rests with the United States because the emergency involves a subject area for which, under the Constitution or law of the United States, the United States exercises exclusive or preeminent responsibility or authority." According to federal regulation, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has the ability to increase the federal cost share for emergency response to 100% at your direction "[i]f warranted by the needs of a disaster (44 CFR §206.47(d)."

Considering the rising number of infected and deceased Americans due to COVID-19; the increasing strain on local fire and EMS agencies; and the economic downturn facing local governments, we ask you to raise the federal cost share to 100%. Fire and EMS agencies will continue to serve their communities as the coronavirus spreads, which will result in further cost increases. In addition, state and local governments will not have the funds to meet a 25% cost

share as the economic downturn continues. As the nation strives to respond to -- and eventually recover from -- this pandemic, state and local governments will face difficulty providing a 25% cost share for FEMA reimbursement for COVID-19-related expenses. By waiving cost-share requirements, you will enable state and local governments to focus on serving their citizens during this time of crisis and speed up America's economic recovery.

Thank you for your support for America's fire and emergency services!

Sincerely,

International Association of Fire Chiefs  
International Association of Fire Fighters  
Congressional Fire Services Institute  
National Fire Protection Association  
National Volunteer Fire Council