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200 U.S. Mayors call for emergency fiscal assistance for municipal governments in U.S. Senate CARES stimulus plan

August 6, 2020 -- 200 U.S. Mayors today called on the U.S. Senate for emergency fiscal assistance for municipal governments in the U.S. Senate CARES stimulus plan.

“Municipal governments, along with state and county partners, continue to take part on the front lines in combatting the COVID-19 virus,” said Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot. “Simultaneously, municipalities are struggling to address the catastrophic decrease in revenues they have experienced because of the pandemic – revenues that support critical services provided to their residents and the overall economy of their state.”

“Some may think revenue replacement for state and local governments is a sort of bailout, but it isn’t. This is a matter of fiscal survival for our cities including keeping city services running. Absolutely every cent we receive from any assistance will go straight back into our communities and businesses,” emphasized Bob Gallagher, Mayor of Bettendorf, IA and Co-Chair of the Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative.

The 200 mayors are facing dire long-term budget forecasts as the country faces the prospect of a prolonged recession.

“Our cities and towns provide essential infrastructure that underpins the U.S. economy, including good-paying jobs and critical investments that will help propel the U.S. economic recovery,” said Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan. “For example, cities invest heavily in transportation systems to connect people to jobs and the water resources that serve residents and industry.”

“Cities across the nation are in the midst of more than just a public health crisis; they face an enormous economic crisis affecting workers and business owners,” said Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett. “Helping our cities will not only assist our citizens in a time of dire need, but also sustain and accelerate state economic recovery.

The cities need flexibility to rebuild the U.S. economy and to continue providing essential services and maintaining infrastructure investments, while avoiding devastating layoffs to police, fire, human service and other city personnel.

“If we’re expected to open schools in the fall, have capacity in place for a major hurricane, and lift it all with a third less revenue, then we need action on this stimulus now and it has to get funds to main street. We only had one city along the entire Mississippi River qualify for direct funding from the CARES Act,” explained Sharon Weston Broome, Mayor of Baton Rouge, LA and Co-Chair of the Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative.

“I’ve lost 80 percent of my revenue in 2020 on top of what I lost battling the historic floods of 2019,” said Mayor Phil Stang of Kimmswick, MO. “Any kind of stimulus for local governments would help keep us from falling off a cliff this fall.”

“In addition to economic stimulus, funding will help safeguard coastal resources and mitigate future damage from erosion, flooding and severe storm events, outdated wastewater infrastructure, exposure to toxic pollutants in the water, agricultural, and urban runoff that feeds harmful algal blooms and chronically contaminated beaches,” said Mayor Michael Vandersteen, chair of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative.

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Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative (MRCTI) is a coalition of 99 mayors from across the Mississippi River Corridor which spans along ten states from Minnesota to Louisiana. The Mississippi River provides drinking water to more than 20 million people and 50 cities. More than 40 percent of the nation’s agricultural commodity output moves on the Mississippi River. The River’s resources support 1.5 million jobs and create \$496.7 billion in annual revenue.

About The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a binational coalition of close to 100 U.S. and Canadian mayors and local officials working to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. The Cities Initiative and local officials integrate environmental, economic and social agendas and sustain a resource that represents approximately 80 percent of North America’s surface freshwater supply, provides drinking water for 40 million people and is the foundation upon which a strong regional economy is based.

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