



GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE
CITIES INITIATIVE
L'ALLIANCE DES VILLES
DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT

MRCCTI

Mississippi River Cities and
Towns Initiative



December 15, 2020

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

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

Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-222 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

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

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

We are writing on behalf of nearly **150 mayors from across America's heartland** to implore you to pass a new COVID-19 package that includes urgently needed financial relief for cities and towns that have borne the brunt of the impact from the pandemic. With infections, hospitalizations, and deaths at unprecedented levels, and economic recovery stalling, our citizens are looking for immediate action from Washington. **We urge you to avoid further delay and approve a new relief package before adjourning the current Congress. Regardless of how it is structured, it is imperative that Congress approve revenue replacement for local governments to ensure the swiftest possible recovery from the pandemic.**

We represent small towns and large cities across the political spectrum stretching from the East Coast across the industrial Midwest down to the mouth of the Mississippi River at the Gulf of Mexico. Our cities are on the front lines confronting the pandemic and suffering from the damage it has caused to our local economies and the revenue shortfalls that threaten our ability to maintain vital services for our constituents.

The Great Lakes and Mississippi River states are among the hardest hit. Our cities reflect the national impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, where on average cities have seen revenues decline by more than 20 percent while expenditures have increased by 17 percent. At the same time, nearly two-thirds of cities surveyed did not receive CARES Act funding. More than 70 percent of cities expect their condition to worsen if Congress does not pass a new COVID relief package.

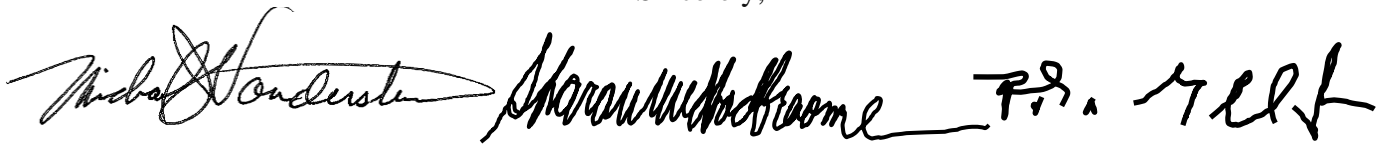
Our cities are experiencing unprecedented financial instability and an escalating pandemic that is straining our ability to maintain basic public services, safeguard public health, and prepare for the upcoming distribution of the COVID vaccine. As a result, an immediate and unified federal response is needed to support state and local efforts to contain the virus and mitigate the economic consequences of this unprecedented crisis.

Without federal financial assistance, our nation's economic recovery will stall and cities and towns—both urban and rural—will be further challenged in rebuilding healthy local economies. Federal aid will also enable our cities to sustain joint response efforts from the public and private sector, and support partnerships between local governments, businesses and their communities to mitigate the economic, health and public safety impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We stress to you the urgency of this request and the need for action now to avoid delays in administering critically needed federal assistance that will impact the health and livelihoods of millions of our citizens.

Our residents appreciate your support for our efforts to maintain public health and safety and keep us on a sustained path to economic recovery.

Sincerely,



Mayor Mike Vandersteen
Sheboygan, Wisconsin
Chair, Great Lakes and
St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

Mayor Sharon Weston Broome
Baton Rouge, Louisiana
Co-Chair, Mississippi River
Cities & Towns Initiative

Mayor Bob Gallagher
Bettendorf, Iowa
Co-Chair, Mississippi River
Cities & Towns Initiative

cc:

Honorable John Thune
Majority Whip
United States Senate

Honorable Richard Durbin
Minority Whip
United States Senate

Honorable John Barrasso
Republican Conference Chair
United States Senate

Honorable Patty Murray
Assistant Leader
United States Senate

Honorable Roy Blunt
Republican Policy Committee Chair
United States Senate

Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Democratic Policy Committee Chair
United States Senate

Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader
United States House of Representatives

Honorable Steve Scalise
Minority Whip
United States House of Representatives

Honorable James Clyburn
Majority Whip
United States House of Representatives

Honorable Liz Cheney
Republican Conference Chair
United States House of Representatives

Great Lakes Congressional Delegation
Mississippi River Congressional Delegation