



AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION

Your Comprehensive
Public Works Resource

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February 1, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate

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

On behalf of the more than 30,000 members of the American Public Works Association (APWA), we are reaching out to urge you to support financial relief for state and local governments in the next COVID-19 relief package. This aid should be passed quickly, and with no eligibility requirements based on minimum population that have excluded smaller local governments from previous relief packages. Without this assistance layoffs and furloughs at public works departments across the country will impair their ability to deliver vital services to their communities, and potentially worsen our nation's economic crisis.

APWA has 63 active chapters throughout North America and is the only association to collectively serve and represent all areas of public works responsibilities. Our members work in both the public and private sectors, providing expertise at the local, state, and federal levels. Working in the public interest, public works professionals are responsible for planning, designing, building, operating, and maintaining all facets of America's vast infrastructure network so fundamental to our nation's economy, environment, public health, and safety. Many of these essential workers have continued to work on the frontlines, placing themselves at increased risk of exposure to the coronavirus and continuing to serve their communities.

State and local governments are facing historic budget shortfalls as the coronavirus pandemic continues. While we appreciate the substantial assistance provided by Congress thus far to support these governments with COVID-19 response, none of the funds appropriated have allowed for the replacement of billions of dollars of lost revenue caused by the virus and associated, unexpected, mitigation measures. Already, this has forced state and local governments to furlough or layoff more than 1 million workers, with more cuts expected if revenues are not quickly recovered.

PRESIDENT
Mary Joyce Ivers, CFP®, PWLF

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Scott D. Grayson, CAE



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Services across the wide spectrum of public works are impacted by this decline in revenue and resultant layoffs. Already, state Departments of Transportation have had to delay or cancel dozens of critical infrastructure projects – roads, bridges, mass transit, and operations and maintenance work so important to our communities, and our nation’s economy. Public works agencies are often responsible for providing access to clean water and wastewater treatment, and layoffs of skilled water treatment technicians may impact these services. Additionally, public works departments with solid waste management responsibilities need a stable workforce to ensure the sanitation of their communities.

Public works professionals are first responders who play a key role in emergency management. Sustaining an effective public works workforce must be a priority to ensure they can continue to carry out these frontline emergency management responsibilities including but not limited to snow/ice removal, crowd control, debris clearing, and traffic incident management.

Public works agencies employ hundreds of thousands of individuals in these fields and numerous other occupations. Layoffs would not only weaken the public works workforce, but also our nation’s economy. Without federal aid, state and local government cuts will contribute significantly to the national unemployment rate and slow down our economic recovery as it is just beginning.

In light of these unprecedented risks to the nation’s essential services and economic and public health, we strongly believe it is in the best interest of the country that Congress quickly pass relief in the amount of at least \$350 billion specifically targeted to state and local governments for the purpose of replacing lost revenue caused by the COVID-19 public health and economic crisis. In September 2020, a Brookings Institute report predicted that state and local revenue could decline by \$467 billion by 2022, highlighting the depth of this crisis. Accordingly, there should be no exclusions based on population, significant direct funding for local governments as well as state governments, and maximum flexibility for governments to utilize the funding as needed to address the unique impacts to their communities.

APWA stands ready to work with you and serve as a resource to your staff as you consider legislation addressing the effects of the pandemic. APWA’s Director of Government and Public Affairs Andrea Eales may be contacted at aeales@apwa.net or 202-218-6730.

Sincerely,

Mary Joyce Ivers
President

Sincerely,

Scott D. Grayson, CAE
Chief Executive Officer

PRESIDENT
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CC: President Joseph R. Biden
Vice President Kamala Harris
House Budget Committee Chairman John Yarmuth
House Budget Committee Ranking Member Jason Smith
Senate Budget Committee Chairman Bernard Sanders
Senate Budget Committee Ranking Member Lindsey Graham
House Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Rosa DeLauro
House Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Kay Granger
Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Patrick Leahy
Senate Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Richard Shelby

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