

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 16, 2020

The Honorable Peter T. Gaynor
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Administrator Gaynor,

We are sure you have received more letters from elected officials over the last five months than you ever thought possible. Unfortunately, COVID-19 is unrelenting and it is time for FEMA to make decisions that may help stem the tide of this pandemic. This letter is asking FEMA to absorb 100% of costs of eligible activities, approve reimbursement for workplace adaptations, and release Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding for COVID-19. America needs FEMA to be a leader during this difficult time in order to ensure that today, tomorrow, and the coming months bring us closer to a world where COVID-19 is under our control.

Today, states like New York are finally seeing a light at the end of the Covid-19 tunnel, but we are still reeling from the effects of the virus. Several other states, however, are now seeing their infection numbers spike. FEMA needs to step up and absorb 100% of the costs associated with all approved eligible activities. You have the power to unburden states who have already been hit with huge budget shortfalls as a result of shutting down huge portions of the economy.

Tomorrow, and in the coming weeks, we want people to safely return to work where they can. Part of this includes funding for workplace adaptations that will slow the spread of the virus. We are asking FEMA to approve funding for installation of physical barriers that will help socially distance employees from customers and visitors. There are rumors that FEMA will not pay for any workplace adaptations, but we have seen no official guidance. Decisions made at the federal level are taking far too long. States are having to guess at what costs may or may not be reimbursed by FEMA, and that is unacceptable. States also require non-contact infrared thermometers (NCITs) in order to screen people entering businesses or government agencies. While we appreciate the FEMA program that will release NCITs from the National Stockpile and give them to individual States, New York State's allocation of 24,538 thermometers isn't enough. New York would be happy to procure the needed NCITs if they were assured FEMA would reimburse the costs of these necessary items.

The following months remain uncertain. In order to prepare for the compound risks associated with COVID-19 overlapping with hurricanes, floods, wildfires, and the upcoming flu

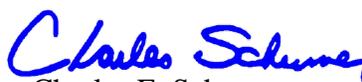
season we are asking that FEMA release HMGP funding for the pandemic. It is customary that HMGP funding is granted when a Major Disaster Declaration is issued, and New York State's declaration DR-4480 should be no different. As a matter of fact, every state has applied for HMGP funding and there has been no response from FEMA. If FEMA is reviewing every state's application for HMGP funding, what criteria are you using? If HMPG funding is approved, will there be any restriction in what it can be used for? Finally, are there any plans to expand the list of eligible activities covered by HMGP funding?

COVID-19 is a public health disaster that has impacted every person in the country. That is something no flood, hurricane, or wildfire has ever done. The unprecedented consequences of COVID-19, both to human life and the American economy, cannot be overstated. FEMA's ongoing and steadfast response to the virus is not going unnoticed, but it is time that your agency provides answers to the difficult questions about today, tomorrow, and next month.

Sincerely,



Max Rose
Member of Congress



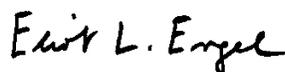
Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



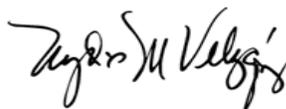
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