



## CITY OF RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA

22112 El Paseo • Rancho Santa Margarita • California 92688-2824  
949.635.1800 • fax 949.635.1840 • www.cityofrsm.org

April 14, 2020

The Honorable Kamala Harris  
United States Senate  
112 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Harris:

On behalf of all of the Mayors in Orange County, thank you for your leadership during the outbreak of COVID-19 and the pandemic we now face. Cities throughout the nation, state, and in Orange County are grappling with the local challenges of this crisis. I am writing to request that Congress prioritize funding for the following items in any additional COVID-19 stimulus funding:

**Direct Funding for Smaller Cities:** I am concerned that the COVID-19 relief packages considered thus far have not provided direct funding to stabilize smaller counties, cities, and towns—specifically, those with populations under 500,000. Furthermore, the funding restrictions associated with the previous allocation in the CARES Act are too restrictive and do not allow for the flexibility that cities need in this crisis.

As such, I urge you to include flexible direct stabilization funding to smaller cities in the next COVID-19 response bill, or to lower the threshold for direct funding through the Coronavirus Relief Fund to localities with smaller populations. Congressman Joe Neguse has introduced a bill that would do just that, and we recommend including that language in concept in any Phase 4 response that Congress considers.

**Free COVID-19 Testing:** The lack of widely available free COVID-19 tests remains a source of anxiety for our residents. I recognize that the challenges with making free tests more widely available is the result of certain actions by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and that new supplies are becoming more readily available. However, Congress must ensure that free testing is included in upcoming COVID-19 legislation.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** The absence of sufficient PPE for our first line responders such as social workers, police officers, firefighters, and city staff pose a significant health risk for our individual employees and the community. Additional work is required to ensure that the appropriate staff have the PPE they need. The direct allocation of PPE or funding to individual cities should be included in any future COVID-19 stimulus funding.

**Advance for Cities and Loss of Sales Tax Revenue:** As you know, one of the primary streams of revenue for cities is through sales tax. As a result of the pandemic, necessary steps have been put in place to slow the spread of the coronavirus, including the closure of certain businesses and the statewide shelter in place orders. This has resulted in a significant loss of revenue for all of our cities in Orange County which have been at the forefront of the local response to the COVID-19 pandemic. I ask that you include advance sales tax funding for cities so we can continue to meet the immediate needs of our residents despite reduced revenues.

Mayor  
Bradley J. McGirr

Mayor Pro Tempore  
L. Anthony Beall

Council Member  
Anne D. Figueroa

Council Member  
Carol A. Gamble

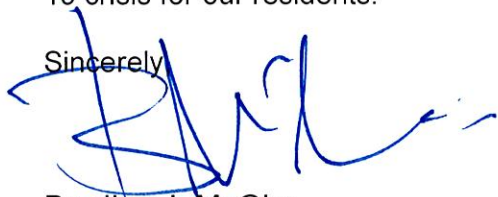
Council Member  
Jerry Holloway

City Manager  
Jennifer M. Cervantez

**Workforce Development Programs:** While many residents are unable to work and may potentially lose their jobs, they still have expenses: rent, utility bills, mortgage payments, and more. Congress needs to build on the provisions already approved to support workforce development programs to slow the potential rise in unemployment.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of these requests. I look forward to continuing our work together to ensure that our cities in Orange County can effectively respond to the COVID-19 crisis for our residents.

Sincerely,



Bradley J. McGirr  
Mayor  
City of Rancho Santa Margarita

cc:

Orange County Congressional Delegation