

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 6, 2020

The Honorable Steven T. Mnuchin
Secretary of the Treasury
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20220

The Honorable David Bernhardt
Secretary of the Interior
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Re: Coronavirus Relief Fund, Tribal Set-Aside of \$8 Billion

Dear Secretary Mnuchin and Secretary Bernhardt,

In the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), Congress provided \$8 billion for Tribes as a set-aside in the \$150 billion Coronavirus Relief Fund. This inclusion represents an important recognition of Tribal governmental parity. Among a number of Tribal specific provisions included in the CARES Act, including supplemental appropriations and access to the Small Business Administration's 7(a) program, the \$8 billion is the largest direct funding to Tribes. We write to express support for a minimum amount of \$750,000 in funding per Tribe as a part of the method for allocating the Tribal set-aside.

For the \$8 billion set aside, the Secretary of Treasury will determine the amount paid to Tribal governments, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior and Indian Tribes, that is based on increased expenditures of each such Tribal government (or a Tribally-owned entity of such Tribal government) relative to aggregate expenditures in fiscal year 2019.

As the Alaska delegation, we write to request a minimum level of funding for each Tribe, similar to how each state government will receive a floor amount of funding. This methodology would ensure that each Tribe would receive a baseline amount of \$750,000. Each state receives \$1.25 billion, with the remaining based on their share of the total population of the states.

With a \$750,000 minimum amount for each Tribe, Treasury could operate under the assumption that every Tribe will incur at least \$750,000 in costs associated with COVID-19. Potential benefits of a minimum per Tribe include: (1) Easing the burden on Treasury of processing over 500 separate applications if Tribes with a claim of \$750,000 or less would not need to submit a claim; (2) Tribes with larger than \$750,000 in claims could still submit an application; and (3) Tribes with little resources to submit a claim, receive minimum funding.

Alaska Tribes, along with Tribal health organizations, corporations, and nonprofits, are playing a critical role in responding to the COVID-19 challenge. A significant percentage of Alaska's elders reside in rural and isolated communities off the road system. Many village homes lack in-house running

water or safe sanitation, making recommended preventive measures a challenge, if not impossible. In our state, Native families remember how past pandemics had a disproportionate impact on Native people. Disparities in past pandemics were due to a combination of chronic health conditions, issues in access to care, poor housing, and the need for water and sanitation services. The same conditions we see today.

We also want to draw your attention to the expansive definition of Tribe used by Congress in this section of the law, which references the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act including Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Alaska Native village or regional or village corporation. These Alaska entities bring unique resources to the table with the responsibility of law to endeavor toward the social and economic well-being of the Alaska Native people.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We also thank you for, and urge you to continue, engaging in rapid, robust, and meaningful consultation with Indian Tribes.

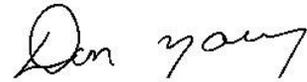
Sincerely,



LISA MURKOWSKI
United States Senator



DAN SULLIVAN
United States Senator



DON YOUNG
Congressman for All Alaska

Cc: Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs, Tara Katuk Mac Lean Sweeney