



East Contra Costa Fire Protection District

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

April 24, 2020

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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

The Honorable Jerry McNerney
United States House of Representative
2265 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Phase 4 COVID-19 Economic Stimulus Package

Dear Senator Feinstein, Senator Harris and Congressman McNerney:

As Fire Chief of the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District (ECCFPD), I want to thank you for the swift action undertaken to address the immediate needs of our nation during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a provider of fire service to approximately 128,000 residents within East Contra Costa County, access to resources to confront COVID-19, as well as relief to recover, is essential to continuing our operations and best serving our – and your – constituents.

While emergency funding provided to state and local governments through the recently passed CARES Act was urgently needed, it is by no means sufficient. Despite the uncertainty and rapidly changing nature of this crisis, special districts are working diligently to maintain essential services and infrastructure during this unprecedented public health emergency. We are working to ensure the safest delivery of critical first response services to our communities. To continue to meet these challenges, it is imperative that Congress provide funding specifically for special districts in the “Phase 4” COVID-19 Economic Stimulus Package.

As the fourth federal COVID-19 relief bill is developed, I urge you and your colleagues to keep in mind these very serious issues. Independent special districts and the communities and regions that rely on our services across the nation will be further harmed should the pandemic continue, and local governments not be considered for inclusion in resources already provided to other entities. On behalf of our district and our mutual constituents, we request you:

- **General fund reimbursement** to mitigate extreme loss of revenue for Fire Districts.
- **Expanded and extended unemployment insurance** provided to workers, including individuals who are unemployed, partially unemployed, or unable to work due to COVID-19
- **Additional Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** for all emergency and front-line workers who have been deemed essential personnel


- **Include local governments in the COVID-19 payroll tax credit.** All public agencies are required to provide paid COVID-19 sick and family leave; however special districts and other public agencies are excluded from the credit, putting us at a disadvantage.

Above all, the COVID-19 pandemic has created a major impact on local communities. Additional federal funding is essential so special districts can continue to provide the necessary support to address the increase in unemployment, minimize the economic impact of business closures, and provide safety for those working on the front lines.

As we protect the community, I ask that you support funding to protect the firefighters and emergency medical service personnel who are on the frontlines in every community – providing life-saving treatment and emergency transportation to the hospital of the victims of this insidious virus.

Again, thank you for your efforts and I look forward to working with you to overcome this crisis.

Sincerely,

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Brian Helmick, Fire Chief

East Contra Costa Fire Protection District