



MUNICIPAL COMPLEX • PISCATAWAY, N.J. 08854

TOWNSHIP OF PISCATAWAY

April 10, 2020

Honorable Members of the New Jersey House Delegation:

Thank you for all you have done to address the COVID-19 pandemic and the related economic and fiscal crisis. We appreciate that Congress has been swift in passing three coronavirus relief bills and we hope that you will soon pass a fourth measure that includes direct and flexible fiscal assistance to all cities across the nation.

We are pleased that Representative Joe Neguse (D-CO) has introduced legislation (HR 6467), the Coronavirus Community Relief Act, which would appropriate \$250 billion for direct fiscal assistance to units of local government with a population below 500,000. **We respectfully urge you to cosponsor HR 6467 and to make sure it is included in the fourth coronavirus relief bill.**

Under the \$150 billion Coronavirus Relief Fund created by Section 5001 of the CARES Act, **only cities with a population of 500,000 or more** will receive direct fiscal assistance. This language leaves out all cities and townships in New Jersey. We are pleased that the CARES Act's authors recognized the importance of direct fiscal assistance to states and cities. However, we do not understand why they chose a population cutoff. Simply put, there is no magic fairy dust that will protect local governments under 500,000 population from revenue losses during this crisis. Indeed, all of our cities are facing a devastating collapse in revenue. We are all mandated to balance our budgets; absent direct and flexible assistance, we will be forced to cut our workforce and reduce services, exacerbating the economic crisis created by this pandemic.

The budget calamity looming over local governments is not going to vanish at an arbitrary population cutoff. Tens of millions of Americans live in cities below 500,000 population and they are going to continue to need basic local government services just as much as Americans living in Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York. In New Jersey, cities are major employers that provide the core local government services that are critical to public health, safety, and welfare and that serve as the foundation of our economy and of basic civilized society.

Thank you again for your efforts during this unprecedented time. We are confident that, working together, our nation can overcome this crisis.

Sincerely,

Brian C. Wahler
Mayor