

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 1, 2020

The Honorable Steven Mnuchin
Secretary of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Mnuchin:

We write regarding the implementation of the tribal provisions and funding priorities in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act. This Act includes critically needed funding for tribal governments during this truly unprecedented time in the world and the implications for the 29 federally recognized tribes in Washington state are of the utmost importance.

Of particular concern for us, is the provision of the Act that provides an \$8 billion set aside for the Tribal Coronavirus Relief Fund to be disbursed by Treasury in the form of grants to tribal governments and tribally owned entities. The Act provides for grant payments to tribes and their entities based on increased expenditures incurred during the pandemic.

Tribal governments and their entities are incurring significant costs and expenses, including new paid leave mandates costs, increased unemployment insurance costs, maintaining operational payrolls, operational bridge loans and numerous other expenses and costs as a result of this pandemic. None of these kinds of costs could reasonably have been considered in a tribe's usual budget approval process. Moreover, these costs are being borne by tribes notwithstanding that tribes have lost virtually all their governmental revenues. Budgets require two sides of the ledger: expenditures and revenues. Tribes are facing increased expenditures without any of the anticipated budgeted revenues.

In order to mitigate this harm, we urge your careful consideration of the specific and unique impact that this pandemic is having on tribal governments and their operations. We understand that you will be conducting a series of consultations with tribal governments, with the first scheduled to occur on April 2nd. We support this direct outreach to tribal governments and encourage you to engage in it consistently in close partnership with the Department of the Interior. It is our hope that you will use the feedback you receive in those consultations, as well as the recommendations included in the attached letter from the National Congress of American Indians, to guide the allocation process and timely dispersal of these funds.

We appreciate your work on this very important issue during this difficult time.

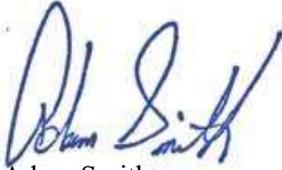
Sincerely,


Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress


Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress


Patty Murray
Senator


Maria Cantwell
Senator



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



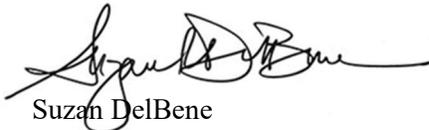
Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress



Denny Heck
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Suzan DelBene
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress



Dan Newhouse
Member of Congress

CC: David Bernhardt
Secretary, Department of the Interior