

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 6, 2020

The Honorable Peter T. Gaynor
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
500 C Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20472

Dear Administrator Gaynor:

We are writing in support of President Jonathan Nez's request that the non-federal cost-share portion of the FEMA-Tribal Agreement be waived.

As of March 31, 2020, the Navajo Nation had confirmed 147 COVID-19 cases and seven deaths attributed to the virus. In recognition of this urgent need, FEMA has already deployed two Incident Management Assistance Team personnel to Window Rock.

Unlike state and local governments, Tribes do not have a tax base to generate revenue. Funding for tribal schools, health care systems, elder centers, food distribution programs, and other tribal programs comes from the federal government or tribally owned enterprises. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, tribal government offices are closed and tribes are not generating revenue to pay employees or fund vital services. Critical expenditures to protect public health and safety during the pandemic are threatening the funding for future vital services for the Navajo Nation's citizens. This waiver would provide urgently needed funds during this extraordinary time so that the nation can fulfill both its current and future obligations to its citizens.

We respectfully request your swift consideration and approval of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,



Kyrsten Sinema
U.S. Senator



Tom O'Halleran
U.S. Representative