

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 10, 2020

The Honorable Donald Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

We are writing in support of President Jonathan Nez's request for a major disaster declaration for the Navajo Nation due to the effects of COVID-19.

On February 27, 2020, the Navajo Nation established the COVID-19 Preparedness Team to prepare for and coordinate precautionary efforts to address the coronavirus. Before a single case was confirmed in the Nation, President Nez declared a public health emergency in response to the pandemic on March 11, 2020. This action implemented travel restrictions, limited business operations, and closed Navajo Nation government offices and schools.

Even with these precautions, the Navajo Nation has confirmed over 18,000 COVID-19 infections and more than 680 deaths. The U.S. Indian Health Service anticipates that infections will continue to rise through the holiday season. Even now, the Navajo Nation's hospitals are operating at capacity levels greater than the previous peak in May 2020. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes that American Indians and Alaska Natives are at a disproportionate risk for complications from COVID-19, due to health and socioeconomic disparities in these communities.

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 501 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§5121-5207, and implemented by 44 CFR §206.35, we ask that the Navajo Nation receive a major disaster declaration. We also believe that, due to the critical nature of the public health threat, the non-federal cost-share should be waived so that all available resources may be dedicated to fighting COVID-19.

Mr. President, we respectfully request your swift consideration and approval of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact us for additional information.

Sincerely,



Kyrsten Sinema
U.S. Senator



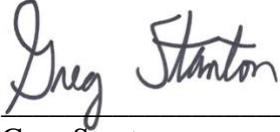
Mark Kelly
U.S. Senator



Tom O'Halleran
U.S. Representative



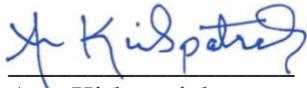
Ruben Gallego
U.S. Representative



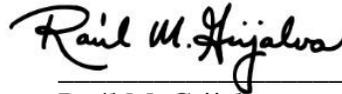
Greg Stanton
U.S. Representative



David Schweikert
U.S. Representative



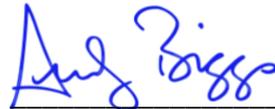
Ann Kirkpatrick
U.S. Representative



Raúl M. Grijalva
U.S. Representative



Debbie Lesko
U.S. Representative



Andy Biggs
U.S. Representative

CC: The Honorable Peter T. Gaynor, Administrator, FEMA