

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 30, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We respectfully request that you take prompt action on the New Mexico Tribal requests for emergency disaster assistance under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act) resulting from the unprecedented response efforts underway to mitigate the public health and economic effects of the novel coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19).

New Mexico Tribes are taking the necessary response measures to protect their communities from COVID-19 including the closure of casinos and Tribally-owned business entities in order to curb the spread of COVID-19. Therefore, New Mexico Tribes' financial resources are depleted due to lack of economic activity and are facing extraordinary financial constraints at this time. For that reason, we also respectfully ask that you waive the 25% cost-share requirement for Tribes as direct recipients of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) public assistance, utilizing the President's waiver authority provided in the Stafford Act for the COVID-19 response. New Mexico Tribes are unable to meet the federal cost-share requirements during this crisis and a cost-share requirement will significantly delay aid that is urgently needed.

The U.S. government has specific trust and treaty responsibilities to American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs), and it is imperative that we stand hand in hand with Indian Tribes during this trying time. We ask that you give strong consideration to our requests and join us to ensure all federal programs and initiatives – including the COVID-19 response – share equally in the requirement to fulfill these trust and treaty obligations.

Thank you again for your attention to these matters. We look forward to working with you regarding the national COVID-19 response for Indian Tribes.

Sincerely,

/s/ Senator Tom Udall (digital)

Tom Udall
United States Senator

/s/ Senator Martin Heinrich (digital)

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

/s/ Representative Ben Ray Luján (digital)

Ben Ray Luján
United States Representative

/s/ Representative Deb Haaland (digital)

Deb Haaland
United States Representative

/s/ Representative Xochitl Torres Small (digital)

Xochitl Torres Small
United States Representative

CC: Pete T. Gaynor, Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency