



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

GARLIN GILCHRIST II  
LT. GOVERNOR

April 16, 2020

The Honorable Peter T. Gaynor  
Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Administrator Gaynor:

I request that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) waive all cost-share requirements for assistance, where authorized, under President Trump's Major Disaster Declaration (4494-DR) for the State of Michigan in response to the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

FEMA is authorized to increase the federal cost-share to 100 percent for emergency work, including Direct Federal Assistance, "if warranted by the needs of a disaster" (44 CFR § 206.47(d)). I believe that the extreme nature of the necessary COVID-19 response far exceeds the capability of the State of Michigan and warrants the full resources and support of the federal government.

The president himself acknowledged the federal government's preeminent role in the response to COVID-19 when he invoked Section 501(b) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act) on March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Section 501(b) states a President may use certain authorities to provide assistance "...when he determines that an emergency exists for which the primary responsibility for response rests with the United States, because the emergency involves a subject area for which, under the Constitution or laws of the United States, the United States exercises exclusive or preeminent responsibility and authority."

On January 31, 2020, Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services Alex M. Azar II declared a public health emergency for the United States. On March 13, 2020, President Trump declared a national emergency to provide additional resources to contain and combat the virus. Upon the confirmation of the first COVID-19 cases in the State of Michigan, I declared a state of emergency on March 10, 2020, so state resources could be diverted to respond to the crisis. On March 26, 2020, I requested the President grant a Major Disaster Declaration for the State of Michigan in order to bring additional federal resources to the State, including Individual Assistance, Public Assistance, and Hazard Mitigation.

On March 27, 2020, the President declared that a major disaster exists in the State of Michigan and ordered federal assistance to supplement State, tribal, and local recovery efforts in the areas affected by the COVID-19 pandemic beginning on January 20, 2020, and continuing. Under the Public Assistance program, Emergency Protective Measures (Category B), including direct federal assistance, are authorized at seventy-five percent federal funding for all areas in the State of Michigan.

In my March 26, 2020 request for a Major Disaster Declaration for the State of Michigan, I requested that the President waive the cost-sharing requirement for Michigan and all political subdivisions herein. At that time, I stated that Michigan was very likely to surpass the need-based public assistance per capita impact indicators. As I anticipated, the unprecedented scale of the COVID-19 pandemic far exceeds the response capability of the State, and we urgently require a waiver of cost-sharing requirements in order to adequately respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

As of April 15, 2020, the State of Michigan has expended more than \$234 million associated with the operation of the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) and activities necessary to prevent, contain, and mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. This crisis is ongoing and evolving, and our state resources are already strained. We require immediate and flexible federal funding to address current and emerging needs.

Initial estimates suggest state revenues could be reduced by \$3 billion in fiscal year (FY) 2020 and another \$4 billion in FY 2021, which represents about 15% of annual state revenue sources, excluding federal funds. These state revenue reductions are a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken to address its spread across the state, such as executive actions on business closures and stay at home orders.

As of April 15, 2020, Michigan has confirmed over 28,000 positive cases of COVID-19—the 4th highest in the United States—with the number growing steadily higher each day. This pandemic has come at an enormous human, financial, and social cost, one that Michigan alone cannot sustain without further federal assistance. I request that FEMA increase the federal cost-share to 100% for emergency work and Direct Federal Assistance to bring the full resources and power of the Federal Government to support Michigan's efforts to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,



Gretchen Whitmer  
Governor