



February 18, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
United States Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
United States Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Chairman
Senate Committee on Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Crapo
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: FEDERAL COVID-19 FISCAL SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL DISTRICTS

Dear Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Chairman Wyden and Ranking Member Crapo:

The National Special Districts Coalition – along with 268 organizations representing more than 30,000 special districts serving millions of Americans with critical infrastructure, emergency response, and community services – urges you to ensure that special districts receive desperately needed COVID-19 federal fiscal aid. As the Senate Finance Committee continues to develop its Fiscal Year 2021 budget reconciliation package, we request that you include language that would require states to distribute five percent of future federal coronavirus relief fund allocations to special districts, as embodied in the *Special Districts Provide Essential Services Act* (S. 91/H.R. 535).

The *Special Districts Provide Essential Services Act* would allocate critically needed financial relief to special districts that have experienced unforeseen expenditures, decreases in revenue, or both, as a result of the COVID-19 health crisis. **Nationally, the pandemic’s toll on special districts is projected to total \$30.94 billion through December of 2021.** The financial burden of the pandemic is unfortunately forcing special districts to make drastic budgetary decisions. Based on a recent survey conducted by NSDC, 41 percent of the nation’s special districts have reduced or expect to reduce their workforce and 54 percent have cut or plan to cut the levels of essential services provided to their communities.

Millions of Americans rely on one or more special districts for essential services such as fire protection and emergency response, water, wastewater treatment, electricity, solid waste management, healthcare, transportation, resource and agricultural conservation, childcare, parks, libraries, cemeteries, air quality, and more. Special districts employ hundreds of thousands of front-line workers, both paid and volunteer. They are each governed by a public board that is typically elected by the community they serve. These special districts are independent and are not governed by cities and counties. Special districts are “subdivisions of the state;” that specialize in providing specific services that other governments are not providing to their community. When special districts are excluded from relief, their essential workers and their residents are excluded from relief.

While some special districts have achieved access to the Coronavirus Relief Fund through limited state and county allotment of funds, **the overwhelming majority of districts have not received direct aid** to offset their COVID-19-related expenditures and financial impacts, which were unforeseen during the previous budget process. This is due in large part to the omission of special districts from the “unit of local government” definition within the *CARES Act* and the lack of explicit Treasury guidance on special districts’ eligibility for funding. As a result, some of our nation’s most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities served by special districts have received little to no federal support for the ongoing provision of their essential local services.

Again, we urge you to ensure that the forthcoming Fiscal Year 2021 budget reconciliation legislation provides special districts with desperately needed coronavirus recovery funds to help districts recoup dramatic revenue losses and backfill the increase in expenditures that many have experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you for your consideration of this critically important request.

Sincerely,

National Special Districts Coalition

California Special Districts Association
Special Districts Association of Colorado
Florida Association of Special Districts
Special Districts Association of Oregon
Utah Association of Special Districts

National and State Special Districts Stakeholder Associations

Agribusiness and Water Council of Arizona
American Library Association
Arizona County Treasurer's Association
Arizona Fire Chiefs Association
Arizona Fire Districts Association
Associated General Contractors of America
Association of California Healthcare Districts
Association of California Water Agencies
Association of Fire Districts of the State of New York
Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies
Association of Washington Public Hospital Districts
Association of Water Board Directors - Texas
California Association of Recreation and Park Districts
California Association of Resource Conservation Districts
California Fire Chiefs Association
California Municipal Utilities Association
California Rural Water Association
Colorado Parks & Recreation Association
Colorado State Fire Chiefs
Colorado Water Congress
Family Farm Alliance
Fire Districts Association of California
Florida Rural Water Association
Illinois Association of Fire Protection Districts
Illinois Association of Park Districts
Illinois Library Association
Illinois Rural Water Association
International Association of Fire Chiefs
Irrigation & Electrical Districts Association
Kansas State Association of Fire Chiefs
Louisiana Fire Chiefs Association
Maine Rural Water Association
Michigan Association of Fire Chiefs
Missouri Association of Career Fire Protection Districts
Missouri Association of Fire Chiefs
Montana Fire Chiefs Association
Montana Fire Trustees Association
Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California
Mountain Counties Water Resources Association (California)
National Association of Emergency and Fire Officials
National Recreation and Park Association
National Rural Water Association
National Volunteer Fire Council
National Water Resources Association
New Jersey State Association of Fire Districts
Northern California Water Association

Northern Illinois Special Recreation Association
Ohio Parks and Recreation Association
Oregon Fire Chiefs Association
Oregon Fire District Directors' Association
Oregon Library Association
Oregon People's Utility Districts Association
Oregon Public Ports Association
Oregon Recreation & Parks Association
Oregon Water Resources Congress
Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association
Rural Water Association of Utah
South Carolina Association of Special Purpose Districts
Tennessee Association of Utility Districts
Texas Fire Chiefs Association
Texas Rural Water Association
Texas State Association of Fire and Emergency Districts
Washington Association of Sewer & Water Districts
Washington Fire Chiefs
Washington Fire Commissioners Association
Washington Public Utility Districts Association
Washington State Water Resources Association
Western Fire Chiefs Association
Wyoming Association of Special Districts

Individual Special Districts

AC Transit (California)
Alameda County Mosquito Abatement District (California)
Alsip Park District (Illinois)
Antelope Valley Cemetery District (California)
Arlington Heights Park District (Illinois)
Arnold Irrigation District (Oregon)
Aromas Water District (California)
Atascocita Fire Department (Texas)
Auburn Public Cemetery District (California)
Baker County Library District (Oregon)
Beardstown Park District (Illinois)
Biola Community Services District (California)
Black Butte Ranch Rural Fire Protection District (Oregon)
Bloomington Park District (Illinois)
Bourbonnais Township Park District (Illinois)
Brooktrails Township Community Services District (California)
Byron Park District (Illinois)
Cambria Community Healthcare District (California)
Carmichael Recreation and Park District (California)
Central Stickney Park District (Illinois)
Chemult Rural Fire Protection District (Oregon)
Chicago Park District (Illinois)
Chiloquin Fire and Rescue (Oregon)
Christmas Valley Domestic Water Supply District (Oregon)
Clatskanie Park & Recreation District (Oregon)
Clatsop Soil and Water Conservation District (Oregon)
Coachella Valley Water District (California)
Coalinga-Huron Recreation and Park District (California)
Coastside County Water District (California)
Conejo Recreation and Park District (California)
Contra Costa Mosquito and Vector Control District (California)
Contra Costa Water District (California)
Copper Valley Community Services District (California)
Costa Mesa Sanitary District (California)

Cosumnes Community Services District (California)
Crescent Sanitary District (Oregon)
Crooked River Ranch Rural Fire Protection District (Oregon)
Cucamonga Valley Water District (California)
Curry County Soil and Water Conservation District (Oregon)
Curry Public Library District (Oregon)
Dayton Fire District (Oregon)
Deerfield Park District (Illinois)
Delta Diablo (California)
Depoe Bay Fire District (Oregon)
Deschutes Public Library (Oregon)
Deschutes Valley Water District (Oregon)
Dexter Rural Fire Protection District (Oregon)
Dolton Park District (Illinois)
Dundee Township Park District (Illinois)
Eastern Sierra Community Service District (California)
Ebbetts Pass Fire District (California)
Eden Health District (California)
Effingham Park District (Illinois)
Elsinore Valley MWD (California)
Emergency Services District No. 3 (Texas)
Englewood Area Fire Control District (Florida)
Fairfield-Suisun Sewer District (California)
Fallbrook Regional Health District (California)
Fort Bend Emergency Services District #1 (Texas)
Fort Myers Beach Fire Control District (Florida)
Fox Valley Special Recreation Association (Illinois)
Frazier Park Public Utility District (California)
Fresno Metropolitan Flood Control District (California)
Fulton-El Camino Recreation and Park District (California)
Gaston Rural Fire District (Oregon)
Gates Fire District (Oregon)
Glen Ellyn Park District (Illinois)
Glenview Park District (Illinois)
Glide Rural Fire Protection District (Oregon)
Gold Mountain Community Services District (California)
Goleta Sanitary District (California)
Grandwood Park Park District (Illinois)
Grayslake Community Park District (Illinois)
Great Parks of Hamilton County (Ohio)
Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District (California)
Greater St. Helens Aquatic District (Oregon)
Grizzly Flats Community Services District (California)
Groveland Community Services District (California)
Gurnee Park District (Illinois)
Hanover Park Park District (Illinois)
Havana Park District (Illinois)
Hayward Area Recreation and Park District (California)
Herlong Public Utility District (California)
Hilmar County Water District (California)
Home Garden Community Services District (California)
Homosassa Special Water District (Florida)
Immokalee Water & Sewer District (Florida)
Indian Wells Valley Water District (California)
Jefferson County Soil & Water Conservation District (Oregon)
John Day Water District (Oregon)
Joliet Park District (Illinois)
Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District (California)
Kettleman City Community Services District (California)
Klamath 911 Emergency Communications District (Oregon)

Klamath Basin Improvement District (Oregon)
Klamath Irrigation District (Oregon)
La Selva Beach Recreation District (California)
Lindenhurst Park District (Illinois)
Lockport Township Park District (Illinois)
Long Grove Park District (Illinois)
Los Osos Community Services District (California)
Lower Umpqua Library District (Oregon)
Madison Valley Rural Fire District (Montana)
Madras Aquatic Center Recreation District (Oregon)
Manhattan Park District (Illinois)
Mark Twain Health Care District (California)
Mesa Water District (California)
Midlothian Park District (Illinois)
Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (California)
Midway City Sanitary District (California)
Monte Rio Recreation & Park District (California)
Monterey Regional Waste Management District (California)
Mt. Prospect Park District (Illinois)
Mundelein Park & Recreation District (Illinois)
Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District (California)
Netarts-Oceanside Sanitary District / Wastewater Treatment Plant (Oregon)
North Coast County Water District (California)
North County Fire Protection District (California)
Northfield Park District (Illinois)
North Highlands Recreation and Park District (California)
Olympic Valley Public Service District (California)
Orangevale Recreation & Park District (California)
Oak Forest Park District (Illinois)
Ontario Recreation District (Oregon)
Orange County Cemetery District (California)
Oregon Water Resources Congress (Oregon)
Panhandle Public Library Cooperative System (Florida)
Park District of Forest Park (Illinois)
Park District of Highland Park (Illinois)
Parrish Fire District (Florida)
Pekin Park District (Illinois)
Placer County Air Pollution Control District (California)
Pleasant Hill Recreation and Park District (California)
Pleasant Dale Park District (Illinois)
Pleasant Hill Goshen Fire & Rescue (Oregon)
Pleasant Valley Recreation & Park District (California)
Polk County Fire District No.1 (Oregon)
Port of Hueneme – Oxnard Harbor District (California)
Port of Newport (Oregon)
Port of Siuslaw (Oregon)
Port of Toledo (Oregon)
Port of Umpqua (Oregon)
Prospect Heights Park District (Illinois)
Redmond Area Park and Recreation District (Oregon)
Resource Conservation District of Tehama County (California)
River Road Park and Recreation District (Oregon)
Rock Island County Forest Preserve District (Illinois)
Rolling Meadows Park District (Illinois)
Rossmoor Community Services District (California)
Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District (California)
San Juan Water District (California)
San Mateo County Mosquito and Vector Control District (California)
Sandwich Park District (Illinois)
Sanibel Public Library District (Florida)

Santa Clara Fire District (Oregon)
Santa Margarita Water District (California)
Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District (California)
Scappoose Rural Fire Protection District (Oregon)
Schaumburg Park District (Illinois)
SEASPAR (Illinois)
Sierra County Fire Protection District #1 (California)
Silver Falls Library District (Oregon)
Silverton Rural Fire Protection District No. 2 (Oregon)
Sisters Park & Recreation District (Oregon)
Skokie Park District (Illinois)
South Barrington Park District (Illinois)
South Coast Air Quality Management District (California)
South Village Community Development District (Florida)
Southern Cascades Community Services District (California)
Southern Marin Fire Protection District (California)
Stallion Springs Community Services District (California)
Stayton Fire District (Oregon)
Sunset Empire Transportation District (Oregon)
Tenmile Rural Fire District (Oregon)
Three Valleys Municipal Water District (California)
Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District (Oregon)
Turlock Irrigation District (California)
Twenty-nine Palms Water District (California)
Vallecitos Water District (California)
Valley Sanitary District (California)
Vernon Hills Park District (Illinois)
Washington Park District (Illinois)
Waukegan Park District (Illinois)
Western Municipal Water District (California)
Western Springs Park District (Illinois)
Willamalane Park and Recreation District (Oregon)
Worth Park District (Illinois)
Yamhill Fire Protection District (Oregon)

Non-Profit and Private Sector

California Builders Alliance
NorthWest Transportation Options
Sacramento Regional Builders Exchange
Self-Help Enterprises
Streamline
TOGETHER Bay Area

cc: Representative John Garamendi
Senator Kyrsten Sinema

Representative Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House of Representatives
Representative Kevin McCarthy, House Minority Leader
Representative Maxine Waters, Chair, House Committee on Financial Services
Representative Patrick McHenry, Ranking Member, House Committee on Financial Services
Representative Carolyn Maloney, Chair, House Committee on Oversight & Reform
Representative James Comer, Ranking Member, House Committee on Oversight & Reform