

April 27, 2020

Hon. Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510



Hon. Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leaders Schumer & McConnell,

First and foremost, we'd like to thank you for the \$160 million that Erie County government received as part of the CARES Act State and Local Stabilization fund. The funding came at a crucial time and provides Erie County with critical resources to respond to this dire public health crisis, which has already claimed hundreds of lives in Erie County. County government is the main authority responsible for responding to this pandemic in our region, and we have been hard at work testing, contact tracing, isolating, and providing protective equipment to frontline and essential workers.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 crisis is not just a public health crisis, but an economic one. Democratic, Republican and Conservative county elected officials want to stress the need for further assistance from the federal government to help recover from what we project to be the worst economic climate in the county's history.

Today, we believe Erie County could face a budget shortfall of nearly \$198 million dollars, a staggering sum that exceeds the county's entire discretionary budget by over \$50 million dollars. To make matters worse, we anticipate further cuts in New York State aid to the tune of 20% leading to losses of another \$29 million dollars.

Erie County's anticipated loss of sales tax and other revenues is directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many Americans have lost their jobs leaving them unable to pay necessary bills, let alone stay in hotels, attend sporting events, buy cars and shop like they did prior to the Coronavirus pandemic. Unfortunately, the legislation as written does not allow the use of the initial \$160 million dollars in relief we received to offset these expected and drastic revenue losses.

The need for further legislation to provide financial assistance is urgent. We are a unified multi-partisan voice in requesting funding that offers us **both additional direct aid to offset revenue losses along with amending the prior legislation** that will allow us to use the \$160 million in a more flexible manner.

Without these revenues, we face near catastrophic cuts in programs, services, and jobs. Not just our schools and our public transportation systems, but crime labs, jails, highway maintenance, and 911 dispatcher positions would have to be cut to unsustainable levels. The overall impact would cripple Erie County government.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this critical need. Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, our county cash flow was strong and our reserves were healthy. Erie County provided services families needed that taxpayers could afford. We implore you to take the necessary steps to provide financial aid to Erie County that is critical to ensuring we can continue to provide the vital services our constituents need.

Sincerely,



Hon. Mark C. Poloncarz
Erie County Executive



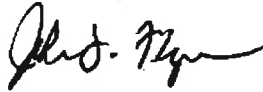
Hon. Stefan I. Mychajliw, Jr.
Erie County Comptroller



Hon. Michael P. Kearns
Erie County Clerk



Hon. Timothy B. Howard
Erie County Sheriff



Hon. John J. Flynn
Erie County District Attorney



Hon. April N.M. Baskin
Erie County Legislature Chairwoman



Hon. Timothy Meyers
Majority Leader



Hon. Joseph C. Lorigo
Minority Leader