WESTERN STATES PACT

May 11, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
United States House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Democratic Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader McCarthy and Leader Schumer:

It is now clear that COVID-19 will be with us for the foreseeable future, and the worst of its economic impact is yet to come. Our states are on the front line against the virus while at the same time leading our states’ recovery. Each of us has seen first-hand how COVID-19 has caused a national recession that we are seeing play out in our states – resulting in a record amount of lost wages and business failures, spiraling unemployment and substantial, unplanned COVID-19-driven costs.

We deeply appreciated the quick financial assistance you provided workers, small business people and those who have been displaced by this crisis. But now, however, our states will be forced to make deep cuts to programs that help those same individuals without similar relief efforts for state and local governments. Even states that began the year in a strong fiscal position are facing staggering deficits amid growing costs of responding to the crisis. With unemployment projected to surpass that of the Great Recession, we are facing unprecedented and ongoing economic challenges.

Without federal support, states and cities will be forced to make impossible decisions – like whether to fund critical public healthcare that will help us recover, or prevent layoffs of teachers, police officers, firefighters and other first responders. And, without additional assistance, the very programs that will help people get back to work – like job training and help for small business owners – will be forced up on the chopping block.
That’s why we are respectfully, and urgently, requesting $1 trillion in direct and flexible relief to states and local governments. Though even this amount will not replace the decline in revenue that we forecast, it will make a meaningful difference in our ability to make-up for COVID-19 revenue losses. This aid would preserve core government services like public health, public safety, public education and help people get back to work. It would help our states and cities come out of this crisis stronger and more resilient.

Red and blue states alike all are faced with the same COVID-19 math, as are Democratic and Republican mayors across our states. The moment requires unprecedented partnership from all of us – across every level of government and across party.

We urge you to take swift action to help states and local governments provide core government services for American families.

Sincerely,

Gavin Newsom
Governor of California

Toni Atkins
President Pro Tempore of the California State Senate

Anthony Rendon
Speaker of the California State Assembly

Marie Waldron
Minority Leader of the California State Assembly

Jared Polis
Governor of Colorado

Leroy Garcia
President of the Colorado State Senate

Steve Fenberg
Majority Leader of the Colorado State Senate

KC Becker
Speaker of the Colorado House of Representatives

Alec Garnett
Majority Leader of the Colorado House of Representatives
Kate Brown  
Governor of Oregon

Tina Kotek  
Speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives

Peter Courtney  
President of the Oregon Senate

Steve Sisolak  
Governor of Nevada

Nicole Cannizzaro  
Majority Leader of the Nevada Senate

Jason Frierson  
Speaker of the Nevada State Assembly

Jay Inslee  
Governor of Washington

Andy Billig  
Majority Leader of the Washington State Senate

Laurie Jinkins  
Speaker of the Washington House of Representative

cc: California congressional delegation  
cc: Colorado congressional delegation  
cc: Oregon congressional delegation  
cc: Nevada congressional delegation  
cc: Washington congressional delegation