

SMALL COUNTY COALITION

May 19, 2020

Transmitted Electronically

The Honorable Ron DeSantis, Governor
State of Florida
The Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor DeSantis,

This letter is being sent on behalf of the Small County Coalition. Coalition membership consists of 39 county commissions that work together to foster support for Florida's rural and small counties. 29 of our counties are officially designated as "fiscally constrained" based on a low tax base. Many are agriculturally based but many are coastal relying on tourism. We appreciate your support – which is essential for our communities to provide services to the public.

During the past two months, counties across the state have worked to stem the spread of COVID-19. Businesses have shut down and citizens have suffered unemployment. Many have been unable to secure benefits designed to help in these situations. At the same time, local governments have worked with the State Agencies to help navigate through these unprecedented times. We are fortunate, many of our communities have not experienced the level of incidences and deaths at the rate of other counties around the state. According to the State Department of Health, 17 fiscally constrained counties have had no deaths at all.

We appreciate your leadership and the efforts of the state agencies during this time. We request that your office move expeditiously to approve and allot the CARES ACT funding appropriated by Congress for State and Local government stabilization. In review -

- The CARES ACT passed Congress on March 27, 2020.
- The Federal Act provided \$150 Billion for Stabilization of State and Local Governments of which Florida was allocated \$8,328,221,078. \$4,580,521,590 (55%) was allotted to the State and \$3,747,699,482 (45%) was allotted for assistance to Florida local governments.
- **12 local governments with populations of 500,000 or greater were direct funded by Congress with \$2,472,413,692 of the funds that the State of Florida was allotted for local governments.**
- **To date, 55 Counties and 411 Cities have yet to receive stabilization funds that were authorized by Congress for local government use. The pressure in our communities is building as we watch 12 large counties address their community needs with their share of CARES ACT funding.**
- There is \$1,275,285,790 remaining in the local government \$3.7 Billion allocated for local government use.
- On May 1, 2020 – the Florida Association of Counties and the Florida League of Cities sent a letter to your office requesting that the \$1.275 Billion in remaining local government funds be earmarked to provide necessary resources to local governments.
- The Small County Coalition supports the proposal for the distribution as recommended by FAC and FLC. In addition, the expenditure of the \$1.275 billion will be done with adherence to the U.S. Treasury Guidelines.

We respectfully send this letter as an urgent request. Please authorize the allotment of the \$1.275 Billion as recommended and expedite the release of the funding to local governments that were not directly funded. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John Meeks

John Meeks,
Commissioner, Levy County
Chair -Small County Coalition

Terry Burroughs

Terry Burroughs
Commissioner, Okeechobee County
Vice-Chair – Small County Coalition

Russell Melendy

Russell Melendy
Commissioner, Hardee County
Secretary- Small County Coalition

Representing Florida's Small and Rural Counties